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THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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The Master of the Mills;

Or, *MILDRED STARBAND'S PERIL*

By L. A. Jocelyn Smith

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CHAPTER I.

SWEETHEARTS.

THE lights flashing from the windows of a massive stone structure, and the steady roll and drone of machinery told to the few pedestrians upon the streets of Riverside that the operatives of the Haselden Thread Mills were working overtime.

The clock in the nearby church tower pealed the hour, eleven sharp strokes, and as the echo died away on the balmy September breeze the rumble and clatter of revolving pulleys grew fainter, then the steady puff of steam ceased, and silence fell.

Presently, from the great gates a stream of humanity poured, and the scores of employes, male and female, sped away, singly or in groups.

"Milly, aren't you coming?" called one of a trio of girls in a shrill voice. "We're waiting!"

"No use waiting for her; her sweetheart is working and he'll see her home. There he is now; come on," replied a second young lady, and the three girls walked rapidly away, just as the bookkeeper at the Haselden mill stepped from the office, locked the door and joined the young lady waiting at the gate.

Removing his hat he placed an envelope in the crown. The white glare from the electric light overhead fell full upon the tall, manly figure, the patrician features, the broad, intellectual forehead, turning the crown of wavy, chestnut hair and mustache to bronze.

For three years Allan Bruce had made his home with Mrs. Starbard, and at the mill it was known that Mildred, the widow's daughter, was his fiancee, and many an employe envied him the possession of the maiden whose creamy complexion, wonderful brown eyes, and cascade of dark ringlets had gained for her the title of the beauty of the Haselden mill.

"Poor little girl, you are dreadfully tired. This overtime work is too much for a delicate woman, and when you are my wife I'll have no more working in the mill," he declared. "Your hand is trembling and your breathing is hurried. Shall we walk slower?"

"No, indeed, I ran down the stairs two at a time. You see, after they shut down I stopped to finish putting on the labels to the last dozen spools, and I'm too much a coward to stay in that great lonely labeling-room alone. I was afraid they would turn off the light, so I rushed down the stairs and it put me out of breath: that's all."

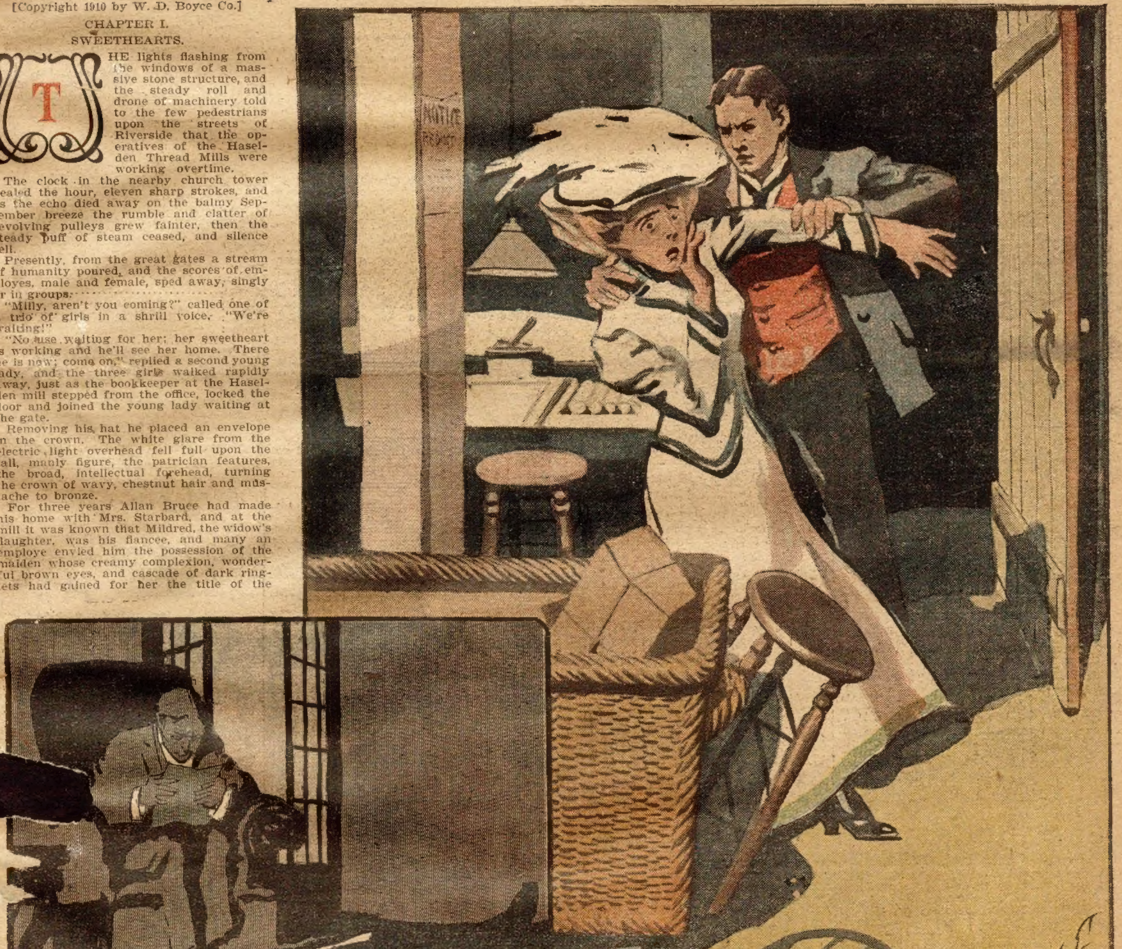
"Why, there's nothing that could harm you. The watchman don't allow burglars or tramps to be hanging about. This working overtime is getting the better of your nerves. I'll speak to Mr. Haselden about that——"

"Better speak for yourself. This is the third night you've worked on those old books, last night till one o'clock, and I can't see the need of it."

"There wouldn't be, if Horace Littlefield hadn't neglected his work, but Mr. Haselden is away, and I wished to have everything in order—we expect him on the midnight train," explained Allan.

"But it isn't your work at all. If I were in your place I wouldn't do it. You are supposed to be his assistant; when the truth is, you do most of his work. Why don't Littlefield attend to his business instead of spending his time, as he does, hunting, fishing, golfing, and racing his auto? He's his uncle's heir, and ought to have some interest in the business, it strikes me."

"That's easily explained, sweetheart. He's constitutionally lazy, only a figure-head in all that relates to real work. There are many of his ilk in the manufactories, sons or relatives of the owners, who amount to nothing; they must have some kind of



business, so they are placed as managers, or in other salaried positions, no matter whether they have ability or not—brains don't count with those fellows—they can swagger about, assume airs, insult those whom they consider their inferiors—better men than themselves—that's about the case with Littlefield."

"Littlefield is not like his uncle," rejoined Mildred. "That's what everybody says. If I were the owner of Haselden Mills I'd leave my money to somebody else. He must see what sort of a man his nephew is."

"Littlefield is no more like his uncle than chalk is like cheese, but, with the exception of these two, the family is extinct," answered Allan. "What a shame it is that so noble a man as Clifford Haselden should have been so unfortunate. It is a pity that his wife left him in such a mysterious manner; had she remained he might have had sons and daughters!"

"And she was a beautiful woman, so old Peter Haskins, the gardener, says, and they were such a devoted couple," returned Mildred.

"It is strange," agreed Allan. "It is many years since she went away; he was a comparatively young man then, and the mystery is as deep as ever."

"I should think Mr. Haselden would have married again; I'm sure it is not for lack of opportunity, but he still clings to the memory of his lost bride, so they tell me. With such men as he, to love once is to love forever. There are few like him, more's the pity. Isn't it a shame that such men as Littlefield should one day be master here?"

"It is, indeed; he will be a hard taskmaster when he gets possession. Clifford Haselden is a just, generous employer, but Horace Littlefield will be exactly opposite—God grant that the old gentleman may long be spared."

The twain were passing along the sidewalk bordered by a long stretch of billboards. Upon the opposite side of the weatherbeaten structure a footpath led across half a dozen building lots. The pair were conversing in an ordinary tone and neither saw the man who had been following them with a catlike tread as he glided behind the frail partition and was keeping abreast, allowing him to catch every word.

"If Mr. Haselden should die tomorrow, I don't believe his nephew would shed a tear. I don't like Littlefield, although he is always smiling when I meet him," declared Mildred.

"Neither do I, but it is best to put up with what one cannot change. Ah, there's a light in the sittingroom and there's mother at the window!"

As the pair crossed the street, the face disappeared from the window, the door swung open, and the widow, lamp in hand, stood upon the threshold.

"Ah-h-h!" muttered the listener, after the door of the tenement house closed. "So, little beauty, you don't like me? I'll find means to change your opinion, or my name isn't Horace Littlefield. I'll disgrace that proud pauper of a lover by some means. I'll oust him from his position. His keen blue eyes look as if they would pierce you through and through, and he's as uplifted as if he were a prince instead of a servant. I'll teach him to meddle with edged tools. I'll humble his pride and snatch his bride from his arms if my usual good luck with the female sex don't fail me, but I must work cautiously, for Uncle Cliff is as straight-laced as a Methodist parson. The old man is pig-headed, and he keeps a tight rein on his business affairs, but he can't live forever, there's some comfort in that."

Muttering and scowling, the young man retraced his steps and made his way to the Haselden mansion.

CHAPTER II.
LETITIA.

The night express from Boston to Albany steamed into the station at Springfield, the iron horse panting and puffing clouds of steam, as if wearied, but pausing barely a sufficient length of time to allow the crowded coaches to disgorge a portion of the passengers, whose places were supplied by the scores that jostled and elbowed their way up the steps.

"All aboard!"

The stentorian voice of the conductor mingled with the clanging of the warning bell, and the train moved out, gathering headway and making record time.

A tall, spare, gray-haired gentleman was among those who boarded the sleeper, his gold-headed cane tucked beneath his arm, a suitcase in his right hand. A man of affairs, and of wealth, it was evident from his dress and bearing.

The slight bustle attendant upon the influx of passengers had subsided, and the silence was broken only by the steady monotonous click as the wheels revolved, lulling the sleeping passengers to a deeper slumber.

There was a sudden grinding, as the emergency brakes gripped the wheels, followed by a thunderous crash, and the occupants of the sleeper sprang from their berths, roused from their slumbers by the shock, the shrieks of women and children and the cries of strong men.

The occupants of the Pullman sleeper, and the crowded smoker were uninjured, and dazed by the sudden awakening, they rushed out upon a scene that is seldom equalled.

The ponderous engine of the express and a heavily laden freight train had met in a head-on collision.

The day coach, crowded with passengers, was telescoped by the baggage car.

Among the foremost to make his way was Clifford Haselden, the gray-haired gentleman.

"Lend a hand here, men!" he called, as a thin arm was thrust from beneath a twisted timber. "Lift with a will!"

Eager hands aided, and from beneath the debris they drew a woman, whose sunken cheeks and hollow eyes marked her as the victim of a fell disease, her long, flowing hair gleaming snowy white under the lantern rays.

She shivered as if with an ague, and Haselden was wrapping his cloak about her when a piteous voice called out:

"Mr. Haselden, for the love of God, get me out! I'm Jack Moore, the overseer in your mill! Won't you help me?"

"Coming, Mr. Moore!" answered Haselden, but the woman clutched his hand.

"Your name?" she whispered, hoarsely. "You are——"

"Clifford Haselden," he answered, wonderingly.

"I've a message for you from the dead, from Emmeline—come to me! I cannot die until I have told you what you must know—promise me you will come!"

They were bearing the impromptu stretcher away to the Pullman sleeper, which had been converted into a hospital.

"I promise! Just as soon as I have aided in this work I will come to you," he replied, his senses in a whirl, for she had spoken of Emmeline, the bride of six months, who had suddenly disappeared, leaving no clew by which to trace her.

A hasty scrawl, tear-blurred and written with trembling fingers was all that remained to explain the mystery:

"Dear Clifford—I must not call you husband—I am leaving you, driven by an inexorable, cruel fate. Do not try to discover the cause—it would wreck your life as it has broken my heart.

"For my soul's salvation, I must go. That you may forget me is the prayer of your heartbroken, EMMELINE."

September tenth, the twenty-sixth anniversary of the day when his beloved Emmeline had passed so strangely out of his life, and the mystery was as deep as ever. He had been dreaming of his lost bride when the awful shock came. Was this silver-haired woman but a phantom, her words but a part of a phantasmagoria?

Not a word passed his lips as he worked, with all his nerve to lift the heavy masses of broken roof and walls from the pinioned limbs of the man who was one of his employes, then his strength failed, and half-fainting, he made his way to the sleeper where the dying woman was lying.

At sound of his voice she opened her eyes.

"Thank God, you are here," she whispered. "I am going fast——"

"In the name of God, who are you?" he breathed. "You are a stranger, and yet you spoke of her—my lost Emmeline."

"I am Letitia—have I then changed much?" whispered the sufferer.

"Letitia!" he gasped. "Can you tell me of her—where is she—why did she leave me? Oh, my God! don't keep me in suspense—I must know!"

"Emmeline is dead; died a few months after she went away—she——"

A spasm seized the speaker, her lips moved, her hand was thrust within her corsage and her fingers grasped an envelope.

"Read it—it—will tell you why——"

It was the last sentence that passed her lips. Letitia lay dead, the envelope half drawn across her bosom.

Clifford Haselden grasped the package and thrust it within his breast pocket, and with dizzy brain tottered from the car, reeling like a drunken man.

The accident had occurred within half a mile of Riverdale station, where his carriage would be in waiting.

"Thank God, you are safe, sir!"

Allan Bruce, bookkeeper at the Haselden Mills, passed a supporting arm about his shoulders.

"We heard the crash at Riverdale, sir, and guessing what had happened, I started on a run for the station. Dennis was passing me in the carriage, when I called to him. Watson told us where to find the wreck, and we drove at a break-neck speed. I came down hoping to be of assistance, for we feared you might be injured," explained Allan. "Lean on me—you are weak and nervous. It is dreadful—Dennis is with the team, just the other side of the bank. Selim is uneasy, and we didn't dare trust him in sight of the wreck."

Supporting the old gentleman, the athletic young man almost lifted his employer to a seat in the carriage.

"Thanks!" whispered Haselden, grasping the firm hand. "It is pleasant to know that I am cared for. I shall not forget your kindness."

"Not a man, woman or child in your employ, sir, but will be anxious for your safety," returned Allan. "I ask a favor that you will stop a moment at Mrs. Starbard's, and let her know you are safe; she and Mildred are very anxious. Tell them I am going to stop here and help in the rescue of those poor people imprisoned in the wreck."

According to promise, Dennis drew rein at Allan Bruce's lodging, just as the light of dawn flushed the eastern sky.

Scarcely had the carriage halted when Mrs. Starbard and her daughter appeared. They had been anxiously watching from the windows, awaiting news from the scene of the disaster.

"Oh, Dennis, is Mr. Haselden safe. Was he on the train?" called Mildred.

The quiver in the fresh, young voice betrayed her anxiety, and Clifford Haselden leaned forward and replied:

"Safe, and here, my dear young lady. It makes me happy to know that—that I am remembered."

"There has been a dreadful wreck, we are told," put in Mrs. Starbard. "Were there many injured—any lives lost?"

"A score or more killed or seriously injured," answered Mr. Haselden. "It is impossible to ascertain how many. There are none from Riverdale, I think. Mr. Moore was in the wreck; I helped to remove him. He has a broken leg and arm, but with good nursing, he will pull through, I think."

"Did you see Allan—Mr. Bruce?" asked Mildred, a blush suffusing her cheek as she spoke the name of her lover.

"He came just in time to help me to my carriage, God bless him. He's a noble lad always at hand when he's needed. He sent you word that he is doing what he can to aid the trainmen in removing the debris from the poor people buried beneath the wrecked coach, and may not be home for hours. Don't be uneasy, he's all right."

"Thank you for your thoughtfulness in letting us know," returned Mrs. Starbard. "We can breathe freer now we know you are safe and uninjured. We couldn't do without you, Mr. Haselden, you know."

Again thanking the widow and her daughter for their interest, Mr. Haselden bade Dennis drive on. He was in a fever of excitement to learn the contents of the package which his hand pressed closely to his breast, lest the precious document might be lost.

In fifteen minutes he was lying back in the great oaken chair, in his own luxurious chamber, his eyes devouring the contents of the letter he had taken from the cold fingers of Letitia Satchwell.

He knew, now, why his adored Emmeline had forsaken him. Half an hour later Horace Littlefield, his nephew and sole heir, found him lying upon the floor in a dead faint.

CHAPTER III.
A MEDICAL OPINION.

Horace Littlefield drew a long breath, bent over the unconscious man, and took the limp hand. There was no pulse, no heartbeat.

"Dead. I believe he's dead. Ah, I'm master of Haselden without the shadow of a doubt. I wonder now what took him off. Heart failure, I suppose. What's this?"

Horace picked up a crumpled letter from the rug, near at hand, and an envelope, bearing the address:

"Clifford Haselden, Esq.
Riverdale,
Mass."

"Ha! I shouldn't wonder if this was what sent him off. I'll see."

He locked the door, covered the keyhole with his handkerchief, and seated himself in the arm chair from which his uncle had evidently fallen.

"A woman's handwriting—some secret affair? No, he ain't such an old fool as to fall in love."

He hastily searched for the signature.

"Letitia Satchwell! Good God! Is the runaway wife going to turn up after all these years, to cheat me of my inheritance?"

He began to read with feverish impatience, and his face paled, his eyelids narrowed.

He sat for five minutes, cogitating, after the reading was finished, the letter crushed in his nervous fingers.

"I must find her. She speaks of a visit to Haselden. I'll take the means to silence her. The wife's dead, but——"

He began to fold the letter, but some glutinous substance adhered to his fingers. A thick plash of blood which his clasp had softened, covered the flap at the point of sealing.

His scheming brain caught the idea.

"I have it! She was in the wreck, and among the wounded. She may be dead. It's time for me to act!"

The clock was striking eleven, as he turned down the gas, stepped out upon the piazza, and gained his own room without observation.

Mrs. Granger, a cousin of Haselden, and his housekeeper, was just retiring, as he left his room.

"I'm going down to the wreck; they will need help, and I may not be in for some hours," he explained, as he met her at the foot of the staircase, and passed out.

"What's come over him? He's developing a philanthropic streak. He'll be of no more use than the fifth wheel of a coach. I fancy there's more of curiosity than sympathy; he's cruel by nature, if he is my cousin's son, and he would treat me like a menial if he dared, but while Cousin Cliff lives, Mr. Horace will be obliged to accord me the respect due a relative. I'll look in and see how Clifford is."

Thus communing with herself, Mrs. Granger tapped at her cousin's door.

There was no response, and a second time she rapped sharply, but heard no sound save the regular ticking of the clock upon the mantel. She turned the knob, but the key was turned in the lock.

"Oh, he never locks his door; perhaps something is the matter. I'll see; he has had bad turns frequently."

Just as Horace had done, she stepped out upon the piazza, and drew aside the curtain from the open window, uttering a cry of dismay as she saw the master stretched upon the floor.

She entered the room, and with a painfully beating heart, placed her hand upon the forehead that was beginning to chill, seized the bell-rope, and rang an alarm that brought the servants in haste. Mr. Haselden was placed upon his bed, and Dennis hurried away, mounted upon a bareback horse, to bring the family physician.

Meanwhile, Horace was making his way to the scene of the wreck, with long strides, faster than he ever walked before.

The half-mile was soon covered, and he arrived at the shed where two or three physicians were busy, among them Doctor Warren. The dead were placed in a row, their faces hidden by their shawls and mantels.

The wounded, some groaning dismally, were laid upon hastily-improvised cots near the door.

"I remember distinctly what Uncle Cliff so often told me of Letitia, and shall know her by two distinct marks, one upon her right ear, where a vicious dog left his toothprints, and the loss of the third finger upon her right hand," muttered Horace, as he raised the covering from a dead face.

The hand of the fourth in the row was uncovered, a lady's hand, small and delicate, and the rays from an electric lamp fell full upon it. The third finger was missing. He fairly snatched the light shawl from her face, and a cloud of silvery hair fell back.

"It is she—Letitia—there can be not the slightest doubt. The two who held the secret are dead, and can tell no tales. I'm in luck. They say the devil helps his own, and his Satanic majesty must have presided over my destinies this night."

He forgot himself, and a mocking laugh broke weirdly upon the hush in that gruesome place.

He smothered the echo of the laugh in a forced cough, and crossed to where the physicians were at their task.

By skillful questioning he learned that his uncle had been beside the woman when she died, but no importance was attached to the circumstance.

As soon as possible Horace left the shed, sauntered among the debris, and left the crowd, taking his homeward way in jubilant mood.

Clifford Haselden was dead, and Horace Littlefield would reign in his place, master of Haselden, sovereign over those men and women toiling in the grimy mill.

How they hated him, those employes. He knew it and smiled grimly.

"Ah, Mildred, haughty, unapproachable as you have always been, you shall yield, for ere morning dawns it will be known that I am arbiter of your fate, master, owner, body and soul—and, Allan Bruce, I shall know how to deal with you."

Mrs. Granger met him in the hall, her

"What's all this?" he asked. "Is any one ill?"

"How can I tell you. Cousin Clifford is—is—dead!"

The reply was a sob, and Horace stood still in his tracks, gazing in her face as if he could not comprehend her words.

"Dead!" he echoed. "It cannot be—impossible!"

"It is true. I found him nearly an hour ago; he is dead! I sent Dennis for the doctor."

"Doctor Warren is down at the wreck. I left him there. Where is uncle? I must see him; he cannot be dead!" exclaimed the hypocrite, in well-feigned consternation.

"Your uncle is dead, Mr. Littlefield, has been dead for more than an hour, probably two hours."

Doctor Holbrook stood by his side.

"I was on my way to the wreck when Dennis met me and brought me here," explained the physician.

"Will you come up and see him, now?" questioned Mrs. Granger, and without a word Horace followed her.

"Heart-failure, Doctor Holbrook says, induced by the sudden shock caused by the wreck," whispered Mrs. Granger, as the twain stood beside the couch and gazed upon the lifeless form. "Poor Clifford!"

CHAPTER IV.
A CHANGE OF DYNASTY.

At sunrise Horace retired to his chamber, but not to sleep. He sat gazing through the open window beyond the park, away toward the flowing river, a quarter of a mile distant, shimmering in the sunlight, catching glimpses of the tall towers across the stream, where the hum of busy life had already begun, and the great clouds of smoke were clearly defined against the opal and blue of the summer sky.

Never had those vast possessions appeared so desirable as now, when he knew that they were all his own, and already visions of the means of increasing his wealth were busy in his scheming brain.

"Uncle Cliff was a soft-hearted idiot," he muttered. "The first use I shall make of my power will be to reduce wages—it will pay. Ten per cent on every man, woman and child employed in yonder mills will make a handsome increase in my income, very handsome indeed, and I shall reap the reward."

Ah, Horace Littlefield, "as ye sow, so shall ye reap." You are sowing the wind, you shall reap the whirlwind.

Three days later, and through the glory of a golden and crimson sunset a procession of mourning coaches followed the plumed hearse which bore the mortal remains of the dead master of Haselden to its last resting place in Mound Hill Cemetery, the beautiful city of the dead, while from the great entrance gates of the Haselden Mill a broad pennon of crape fluttered, and a great square of pasteboard bore the notice:

"CLOSED FOR THE DAY."

Scores of employes thronged the streets of Riverdale hastening to join the procession to the grave, for Clifford Haselden had been an indulgent employer, and many a heart, beating beneath a shabby coat or frayed basque, mourned sincerely while in that crowd doubts were privately expressed of the kindness of the new owner, whom they instinctively feared and disliked, feel-

OWES HER LIFE TO

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Chicago, Ill.—"I was troubled with falling and inflammation, and the d[illegible] tors said [illegible] get [illegible] had [illegible] I kn[illegible] stand [illegible] one, so I wrote to you sometime ago about my health and you told me what to do. After taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Blood Purifier I am to-day a well woman."—Mrs. WILLIAM AHRENS, 988 W. 21st St., Chicago, Ill.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs, contains no narcotics or harmful drugs, and to-day holds the record for the largest number of actual cures of female diseases of any similar medicine in the country, and thousands of voluntary testimonials are on file in the Pinkham laboratory at Lynn, Mass., from women who have been cured from almost every form of female complaints, inflammation, ulceration, displacements, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, indigestion and nervous prostration. Every such suffering woman owes it to herself to give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a trial.

If you would like special advice about your case write a confidential letter to Mrs. Pinkham, at Lynn, Mass. Her advice is free, and always helpful.

ing sure that the change in dynasty boded them no good.

It was a stately and imposing pageant, the deep-toned bells of the great manufacturing town tolled out a solemn knell, the measured strokes falling sadly upon the drowsy, perfumed air.

The principal mills and shops were closed as a tribute of respect to the wealthy magnate who had occupied more than one post of trust and honor in their midst.

In the foremost circles of employes who gathered at a respectful distance from the open grave while the body was consigned to its last resting place, were two whose bearing and general air made them conspicuous, quite distinct from their fellows.

Allan Bruce, distinguished-looking, although garbed in a plain suit of black, and Milly Starbard, upon his arm, her dimpled face just now very grave, shaded by a modest, daisy-wreathed hat, her brown eyes filled with unshed tears as the coffin was lowered.

Upon the opposite side of the open grave Horace Littlefield stood, with bared head, the slanting sunbeams falling full upon his crisp, raven hair, his eyes lowered, but at intervals glancing with a furtive, angry glare upon Bruce.

Both were in his employ, now, his slaves, he mentally termed them, in the great thread mill upon the opposite river bank.

She raised her eyes, meeting that glance, which changed to a look of fierce admiration, and her tears dried, giving place to an angry sparkle.

Horace Littlefield saw and understood, a hot flush of wrath reddened his swarthy cheeks and kindled a red spark in his black eyes.

"You'll alter your high and mighty tone before a week has passed, my dainty beauty," he muttered, savagely, as he turned away and entered the waiting carriage that bore him back to Haselden.

"I'll change affairs at the mill right speedily. Uncle was a good business manager, as far as he understood, but too soft-hearted, too dead-easy, by half; other firms are reducing wages, and why not the Haselden mill? Bruce dared to hint that it was not safe, that a cut meant a strike, and all that sort of bosh! The meddling idiot! I'll try it—let them strike and be hanged! I'll soon teach him his proper place—in fact, I think that he pretty thoroughly understands that whatever Uncle Cliff might allow of his interference, his advice is not required by me, and will not be tolerated. I would discharge him at once, only that I am not sufficiently posted in the business management just at present, but his time will come. I hate him! What business has he, a hireling, to stand in my path, to claim the beauty of Riverdale? Ah-h-h, sweet Milly! I am owner of Haselden Mills, and henceforth your fate is in my hands—yes, I'll send your plebeian lover to the regions of Pluto, and win and wear the little beauty—you will choose my love in preference to starvation. I'd be tempted to offer even the wedding ring, although I've no taste for the matrimonial halter. Could I, heir of such a fortune? No-o-o, that wouldn't pay, but all the same, mine you shall be and without the trammels of matrimony. That would be too much risk, in view of the fact that I'd soon tire of an angel. Another thing, I must speak to the superintendent about the reduction of wages. He'll kick, I know, but he'll soon find who is master of Haselden."

A week passed and Horace Littlefield made himself obnoxious to his employes by his arrogant manner and insulting speech, besides the story was rife that he contemplated a cut in the wages.

"Is anything wrong?" Mrs. Granger questioned, as the twain sat upon the piazza, after lunch, he smoking, she engaged in a bit of hemstitching.

"Wrong, why?" he growled.

"You are moody, and I've learned to interpret your expression. I'm sure something is annoying you."

"Nothing except the rumor has leaked out among the employes of my intention to reduce wages, and, as a consequence the hands are incensed. There are even hints of a strike. These people are an ungrateful set, a bad lot, like all of their class."

"Reduce the wages? Surely, you can have no intention of doing so?"

"I must. My interest demands it," he answered, curtly.

"But your uncle had refused to make a reduction, even when solicited by other manufacturers, proprietors of rival concerns, he believed that he was making a fair profit under the present scale of wages. Why, then, make a change?"

"My uncle was an unusually indulgent employer; his people adored him, or, what amounts to the same, pretended to, but gratitude cannot for a moment be compared to dollars and cents in a practical point of view. One must attend to his own interests if he would be successful. Uncle Cliff was a paragon of goodness, a model employer, but altogether too lenient for a thorough man of business. He might have doubled his fortune had he looked closely at the little items, and I shall certainly avoid following his example in that particular."

The answer was given in a hard, unyielding tone that admitted of no debate, and Mrs. Granger answered only by a sigh.

She saw he was in ill humor, and felt that the annoyance was of his own making. All day he had been at the factory, listening to the remonstrances of Sprague, the superintendent, and overseers, and noting the lowering brows and deep scowls of the workmen.

Notwithstanding Sprague's warning, he had still determined to carry out his intention, and on that very morning had caused posters to be placed upon the door of each department, the announcement that a reduction of fifteen per cent would be made from the wages heretofore allowed the employes of the Haselden Thread Mills, for he had decided to make a still greater reduction than he had at first contemplated.

His avarice alone had prompted him to the robbery of the faithful employes who had served Clifford Haselden, many of them for more years than Horace had lived, and the young tyrant knew that a fire would be kindled that might end disastrously, but with the doggedness of his nature, he determined to yield not one whit to any demand that might be made.

"There'll be a strike," declared Sprague, "may be, bloodshed."

"Let them strike," sneered Horace. "I will soon starve them into submission. Employment is not as plentiful as blackberries, this year, and with the prospect of a coming winter, without food or fuel, or a shelter, for I shall insist upon the strikers leaving my tenements at once, they must yield. I'd lower the wages now if I were dead sure of a strike."

"You have threatened to reduce the wages of the hard-workingmen and women over at the mill; you must not, you cannot! Believe me, it is a dangerous experiment," protested Sprague.

"You came here to dictate to me! Quite useless, my worthy Sprague. I have already taken the step, the bills are posted where all have read them, provided the idiots can read," he replied, tartly.

"And for what amount are they to be reduced?" asked Sprague, quietly.

"It is none of your affair, but I have not th least objection to answering, fifteen per cent."

"Fifteen per cent?" echoed Sprague. "Are you mad? Listen to me, Mr. Littlefield. Were it not for my interest in your welfare, in the affection that I cherished for your uncle, I might remain silent, but you must not, cannot do this wrong! It will bring destruction, the vengeance of Heaven upon your head; use the wealth you are now in possession of for the good of your fellows, be charitable, and above all, be just, revoke your decision, tear down the posters. I have warned you, and now I will go. Remember what I have said, and be wise!"

CHAPTER V.

HASELDEN MILLS.

It was two weeks after Horace Littlefield's memorable interview with Sprague, and the last evening in the month of August. On the morrow the provisions set forth upon the posters displayed about the various departments were to take effect, reducing the pay of every employe at the Haselden Mills, fifteen per cent, and all day the men went about their tasks with black frowns upon their faces, and the girls whispered and commented upon the strike which must surely follow.

Most of the men were members of the Labor Union, and all over the land the tocsin of revolt had sounded, while the cut at the Haselden Mills was more exorbitant than at any of the neighboring manufactories, increasing the discontent to a dangerous pitch. If their brothers and fathers were forced to leave work, the girls could not remain.

But on this night, for some inexplicable purpose, their lordly employer had requested a dozen of the most expert winders to reamin, offering triple pay for their labor after the usual working hours, and in the winding room in the second story, the spindles were humming with a clatter and a whir, and a dozen maidens bent over their tasks, busy as working bees.

"Is Milly Starbard working, Sophie?" asked pretty, rosy-cheeked Ellen Page, turning to her right hand neighbor.

"Of course; she has got to get out a hundred dozen before the order is filled," answered Sophie Blake. "Why?"

"Because it is awfully pokerish and lonely up there in the labeling room, with not a single soul on that floor. It is dismal as a tomb in the evening. I'd be dreadfully afraid to stay there alone, and we have to work until eleven, sure?" returned Ellen.

"Pooh! she won't be alone; Allan Bruce will go up there and keep her company, be sure of that; he always does, you know," answered Sophie.

"Yes, I know, but he won't be here tonight, though. The great and only Littlefield sent him to Springfield this afternoon, an hour before we got the order to work overtime, but I shouldn't wonder the least mite if his Grand Mogulship was in the labeling room this minute himself. I saw him go upstairs an hour ago when I went for the basket of spools, sneaking along as if he was going to steal a sheep," concluded Ellen.

From a corner of the great, open workroom in the third story a portion was partitioned, the shelves upon three sides packed with parcels, tier upon tier, and before the labeling board Mildred Starbard sat, her dimpled fingers flying like white-winged birds as she deftly placed the labels exactly in the center of each particular spool, varying the occupation by folding them in parcels, one dozen each.

She was an expert, and the long, glittering steel pin with which she drew the twine into a knot, glanced under the gaslight.

She made a beautiful picture, and so thought Littlefield as he silently regarded her from his point of observation just outside the door leading to the outer room.

"By Jove! Lovely enough to tempt even 'Bluff King Hal,' or any other of those old duffers! If it were not for my position, I'd marry her to spite Bruce. But have her I must and will!"

"Milly!"

His voice was low and tender as he bent over the working girl, his breath fanning her cheek, one hand pressing her shapely shoulder.

"You must be tired, my dear; please leave your work. I have something important to say to you, something of more interest to me than the order to be filled."

He drew the board from beneath her hands, laughing softly as the conscious blushes mantled her face.

She turned her head a trifle haughtily and met his gaze. An evil smile was dawning upon his lips, an evil light leaped to his eyes.

"Don't you think me a model employer?" he questioned, laying his arm across her shoulder in a half caress. "I imagined you might be lonely in this dismal place, and have come to keep you company."

She slipped from the high stool, drawing her shoulder from beneath his arm with an angry little jerk.

"If you have no further use for my services this evening, I will hasten home at once," she answered, in an annoyed tone, her face flushing a brighter hue.

He hailed the blushing as a favorable omen. Surely this working girl must be exceedingly flattered by his attention. He had often paid her compliments, but never had he ventured upon the familiarity of laying his hand upon her arm.

His face was glowing hotly, and she shrank from the unholy light smouldering in his eyes.

With trembling hands she began to fasten the light veil upon the hat she had placed upon her head, turning away from that bold gaze of admiration.

He took a step nearer and bent over her, standing directly in front of the door she must pass to reach the outer room.

"You know the reduction in the wages takes effect tomorrow," he remarked, suavely, as if it were a very pleasant subject he broached.

"I know," she replied, curtly.

"But in your case I shall make an exception."

"Hardly," she replied, with spirit. "My services are ended with tonight's work, and I must now bid you good evening."

"Nonsense! You will do nothing of the kind. With the threatened strike you have nothing to do; you have neither father nor brother, not a relative, even remote, who is employed here, and so you have no grievance; besides, not a man will leave my employ; those fellows can grumble and threaten, and it will all end in smoke, but what use to multiply words? Mildred, I love you, and you cannot be so blind as not to have known a fact that is patent to every employe in the mill; those delicate hands were never intended to be roughened by labor; that lovely face and enchanting form must never be hidden in a poor man's home; your beauty has maddened me——"

"Mr. Littlefield, will you allow me to pass?" she demanded. "You insult me by those fulsome compliments that have no meaning——"

"No meaning! By Jove, but they have! You are the most beautiful woman I have ever looked upon; the most bewildering, entrancing angel the world holds. I love you madly, and mine you must be!"

Her eyes blazed, her cheeks flamed scarlet.

"Stop!" she cried, raising her hand with a commanding, haughty gesture. "Your words are as insulting to me as unworthy a true gentleman, and if ever repeated I shall inform my affianced husband, at whose hands you will receive your deserts. Stand aside, and allow me to leave the room!"

"By heavens, no! Not till you have heard me out. You shall neved leave this room until you have promised to be my own!"

He grasped her hand, but she snatched it from his clasp.

"Will you stand aside and allow me to pass, or shall I be obliged to call for assistance," she asked, but although her voice was calm, her heart was bounding with great throbs of fear.

The entire floor was deserted; in the room below the whir of machinery would drown the loudest outcry, and her lover was miles distant—sent away for the purpose of rendering her helpless, she felt—not a man within the building, save the night watchman, and he was upon the lower floor.

Littlefield watched her speaking face for a moment, and a low, sardonic laugh burst from his thin lips.

"And you refuse my offer—my love? You, a poor hireling refuse the love of a gentleman, more, the man whose money provides the bread you eat, the shelter above your head, the garments you wear! Once more I give you the opportunity, and you will do well to consider ere you make your final reply!"

He hissed the words between his set teeth, and his burning gaze was fixed full

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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Or, *THE MYSTERY OF A NIGHT*

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER V.
TWO DISAPPEARANCES.

FOR SOME moments after the startling announcement of my strange marriage a silence fell between the detective and myself.

I expected an outburst of reproof. I knew Glidden well. He was cool, calculating and incisive. In the line of duty he spared neither friend nor foe. At no time did he mince words, and his language was never ambiguous.

"This is startling; it is the unexpected," said Glidden calmly, as he pushed back his chair and rose to his feet. I watched him take several thoughtful strides across the room and when he again turned to me it was to re-seat himself in the chair.

"Tell me all, Taverny," said he.

For the next ten minutes I was the only speaker. I began at the beginning and went to the end of my story with Glidden for a silent listener.

As I concluded I leaned back and waited for his comments. He coolly took out his cigar case and tossing me a Havana, selected another for himself. His silence became aggravating. What was the man thinking about?

"I didn't expect this," said he at last, lifting his gaze to my face. "It was not this I thought of when I left the note with the maid asking you to do nothing rash and to keep out of all entanglements. I learned of your misfortunes in Europe, for I encountered Jansen in Edinburgh. Life is not made up of successes alone. But you've got ten thousand now for another try with the fickle goddess—ten thousand and a wife!"

"I don't know about the latter," I answered dolorously. "You forget the occupant of the slab in the morgue."

"I see. You connect your marriage with the murder."

"It was murder, then?"

"Yes. Let us see. You were mysteriously wedded at eleven; at a quarter past twelve Sergeant Bossom found the girl dead in Odeon Park, which is but a few steps from Holden square. That's what makes you suspect that instead of being a benedict, you are a widower?"

I smiled grimly.

"Doctor Brown," continued Glidden, "made only a superficial examination. The girl was stabbed in the back by a poinard which made a scarcely perceptible wound. I found it more by accident than design. She must have died instantly. Her hand—I remember that you were not permitted to gaze upon the face of your bride—appeared startlingly familiar to you? I can understand that, for under the circumstances—and you held the hand during the ceremony—you would naturally remember the exact shape of the member."

"It is photographed on my brain as it were," said I.

"Just so. Do you think it likely that the girl—your wife, would be murdered by those who carried out the strange scheme in Holden square?"

I shook my head.

"You are the man of mysteries, I mean that you solve these dark puzzles, Glidden," said I. "It is too opaque for me."

The detective was silent for a moment.

"The rector was entirely strange to you?" he suddenly asked.

"Entirely. I never saw him before."

"You may not be familiar with the personel of the city's clergy?"

"I confess that I am not. Do you think one of the cloth would take part in an affair of this kind?"

"There's no telling," smiled Glidden. "I have had some strange experiences with the clergy. All are not just what they might be and the love of money, you know, Taverny, is the root of all evil. It would take us too long to go through the catalog of the city's ministers. We must find your marrying minister, if we really need him, another day."

Once more Glidden rose and went to the window, which looked out upon the street.

"The dead girl in the morgue," said he, talking over his shoulder, "is not your wife, Miles."

I started and regarded him in silence for a moment.

"Then, who is she?"

"Let the future tell us," was the reply.

"Was she connected in any way with the mystery of Holden square?"

Once more the look which was unfathomable came back into the detectives eyes, and he flicked the ashes from his cigar.

"I have found a wife for you," said he.

"But, as I have told you, it is too late. The ten thousand caught the fly and he fell into the spider's web."

Glidden laughed a little.

"An open confession," said he, "is good for the soul."

"Whom had you selected to become Mrs. Taverny?"

"Do you know Sara Thornton?"

I gave a start which instantly arrested Glidden's attention.

"Heavens!" cried I, "that is the woman in black. I have met her but once. And you have selected her for my wife?"

"Why not, Taverny? Sara Thornton has a neat little fortune in her own right. She is a widow, discreet and pretty and one of the set that has the entree to the fashionable circles of Murray Hill."

I did not reply. The thought, to say the least, was ridiculous.

It was Sara Thornton whom I met but a short time previous to my mysterious marriage and in the vicinity of Holden square.

"We must think over these events," resumed Glidden. "Take my advice, Taverny, and don't take another bride without the knowledge of Homer Glidden."

"I shall wait till I'm wifeless first," I replied.

Ten minutes later I saw Glidden do down the steps and heard him close the front door.

The mystery was deepening. The murder—if murder it was—of the girl found in Odeon Park seemed to intensify the situation and despite the detective's assurance, I continued to connect the crime with the nocturnal wedding.

It was the middle of the forenoon before I ventured from my lodgings. I had seen no newspaper and, anxious to know what the reporters had spun out of the Odeon Park affair, I hastened to the nearest news stand and purchased a morning Journal.

The account was brief and aggravating. Beyond the mere fact that a young girl had been found dead in Odeon Park, but little was said. I threw the paper aside in disgust.

When I returned to my lodgings Mrs. Gore, the landlady, met me in the hall with a sorrowful countenance.

"What is going to happen me next?" she cried the moment she set eyes upon me. "Milly has gone!"

"Milly?"

"Yes, Mr. Taverny. The girl left a strange note behind, saying she could remain in the house no longer and she asks your forgiveness."

"I have nothing to forgive Milly," said I, puzzled. "The girl is good and proper, Mrs. Gore, but she may have imagined strange things."

"Here is her letter—the one she left on her dresser," and Mrs. Gore handed me a note, which she must have read many times.

I took the little sheet of not very clean paper, for it had once been the fly-leaf of a book, and read as follows:

"Dear Aunt Jane—I can remain under your roof no longer. Please pity me and don't blame me till you know all, if you ever do. I must go. Tell Mr. Taverny to forgive me. I did not intend to do it, but it was a terrible temptation. Be sure to ask him to forgive poor Milly, for he is kindhearted and I am sure he will pardon me. Please don't try to find me, Aunt Jane. I will always think kindly of you for you have been good to me. Good-by, and think kindly of your troubled niece, MILLY.

"P. S.—Don't forget to ask Mr. Taverny to forgive me. I hope he will."

I handed the letter back to Mrs. Gore with a smile.

"The poor girl," said I, "is laboring under some hallucination. She never in any way wronged me, therefore, I have nothing to forgive. It is an unaccountable freak of hers."

I went upstairs to my room and looked out of the window reflectively.

Suddenly I recoiled with a cry.

A street car was passing, and, standing on the rear platform was the rector who had bound me by holy bonds to the mysterious bride.

In a moment I was plunging almost headlong down the staircase.

It was but the work of a moment to reach the street. The car was still in sight, but near the turn. Hoping that it would stop at the corner, I ran toward it and sprang upon the platform.

But my man was not there.

Chagrined over my failure I bit my lips and looked through the car.

Some four squares away I alighted. As I reached the sidewalk I glanced back at the car and saw the rector of mystery again where I had seen him first. In some mysterious manner he had baffled me, and as the car whisked out of sight I stood puzzled on the pavement, wondering by what magic the man had eluded me.

Turning on my heel, I walked in direction of the club, several blocks away and soon tripped up its steps to cogitate over a cigar upon the singular escapade of Milly the maid and the losing of the rector of 99 Holden square.

CHAPTER VI.
MADAM WRAY'S SOIREE.

It was just a week after the events I have related that a scented invitation found its way to my table. Picking it up with some curiosity, I saw that it was from Madam Wray, one of the fashionables of the select circle, to attend her soiree the following night.

Of Madam I really knew but little. She was a woman who courted notoriety, and her soirees were heralded far and wide by the metropolitan newspapers, doubtless at so much per line. Moreover, she was the possessor of much wealth, which had fallen to her share when her late husband obligingly left her a widow, childless and the occupant of one of the finest brown stone mansions in upper tendom.

There were those who courted her favors, but I had never been one of them.

Once I had attended one of Madam's receptions, but that was before my legacy fell into the hands of the conscienceless speculators. On that occasion I had met some swell people, who disgusted me with their manners, and since then I had eschewed such functions.

But here was a chance, I thought, to divert the mind from a subject which had worried it, and Heaven knows I had had excitement enough of a certain kind to drive one to the verge of insanity. It was under such circumstances that I decided to attend Madam Wray's soiree.

As I entered the ample hallway of the mansion on Aureole avenue, I beheld a scene of indescribable splendor. The great house was ablaze with light and the brilliantly-robed guests of Madam completed a picture dazzling in the extreme.

Passing into the immense parlor I drew to one side and looked over the assemblage. There were few whom I knew, despite my cosmopolitan acquaintanceship.

"Madam," thought I, "is picking up new friends. It's a new deal, so to speak. When she comes in I shall apologize and retire."

The following moment a murmur ran through the crowd, and all eyes were turned toward the broad staircase, which was fringed with costly plants, rendering it a bower of tropical beauty.

Presently a figure appeared at the top of the flight, and the next moment Madam Wray came down the stair. Never before had I seen her look so regal. Blessed with a superb figure, which was set off by the elegant garments she wore, she was certainly the observed of all observers, and awed silence reigned in the house as she descended.

I drew off and looked at her in the midst of her admirers and satellites.

All at once a voice, which rang pleasantly on my ear, came from behind a little group of palms.

I did not turn, for that would have seemed rudeness, but the following instant a figure came into view.

Our eyes met over the fronds, and she extended a jeweled hand.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Taverny," said she.

It was Sara Thornton!

What might have passed between us will never be known, for suddenly a little cry went through the house and there was a skurrying back on the part of some of the crowd, for a delicate young girl, overcome by the closeness of the room, had fainted.

"It is Miss Folsom," said Sara Thornton, with a glance into my face, and leaving me she hurried away.

I did not wait for her return, but sauntered from the room into an adjoining one almost as large and beautiful. There were several cozy corners there and I thought of Sara Thornton as I sought one and sat down. I was almost wholly screened from view by the mass of tropical foliage that abounded there.

I saw the guests moving about and now and then whisperings came to my ears.

"Why have I been invited here?" said I to myself. "Madam Wray cares nothing for me. She has seen me but the once and evidently has forgotten me. There is some subtle design in my being here. Is it Sara Thornton?"

As the name went through my brain a slight noise attracted my attention and, upon looking up I beheld the woman in black almost within reach of my arm. She had come upon me almost noiselessly and but for the rustle of some boughs which her skirts had brushed, I would have remained unaware of her presence.

As she had not yet discovered me I fell to observing her. She was beautiful and I did not wonder at Glidden's selecting her for my wife. Sara Thornton had been a widow four years, but she had lost none of her looks and none of her vivacity.

She looked around the room as if searching it for some person, and suddenly turned away. I followed her with my eyes until her figure was lost among the throngs of Madam's worshippers in the room of palms.

"How do you like it?" suddenly asked a voice as the speaker halted closer to me than where Sara Thornton had stood. "She's the belle of the ball, eh, Taverny?"

I was looking into the face of Glidden, the detective.

"I did not know——" I began, when he interrupted me.

"Oh, I'm everywhere," he smiled. "It's my business, you know. But the divine Sara? What do you think of her, Miles?"

He was standing close to me and I threw up my hand and pressed his sleeve.

"You remember that I am a benedict," said I. "I have just seen Mrs. Thornton——"

"And secretly acknowledged that she's the catch of the season? I wish I was in the market, Taverny."

"She's your for the catching, Glidden."

"My pursuit of the beautiful butterfly might disturb the dreams of a little girl in London."

"Ah! But tell me, Glidden, why I was invited to attend Madam's soiree?"

"The answer has just left you," was the reply.

"Sara Thornton?"

"Yes."

"But I have no desire to become the husband of the beautiful Sara. I cannot so long as I am bound by the cords of matrimony."

"You found and lost the rector yesterday."

The sudden reference to my adventure on the street car nearly upset me.

"Where were you?" I inquired.

"In the car."

My look became a stare.

"And you let him go, too?" I exclaimed.

"We'll discuss this phase of the matter some other time," said Glidden. "If I am not mistaken, the roseate Sara is coming back looking for you."

I glanced through the palms and saw the fair widow approaching.

"Stand before me, Glidden," I implored.

With a perversity that irritated me, the detective deliberately stepped farther away and left the space clear between Sara Thornton and myself.

The next instant she spied me and came on with a light exclamation of pleasure.

"I have been looking for you, Mr. Taverny!" said she. "Miss Folsom has quite recovered, but insisted upon being taken home. She is not used to crushes like this."

Already Glidden was out of sight and I had been fairly caught by the net of a beautiful woman.

"Mrs. Wray is superb tonight, don't you think?" pursued Sara Thornton. "I never saw her look more like herself. She is wearing the new diamonds just from Paris. I——"

She paused abruptly, for a loud cry rang through the house, and Madam herself, tottering halfway across the room, threw up her hands and dropped in a heap at the foot of the staircase.

Sara Thornton did not move, but looked at me with an expression I shall never forget.

I sought the face of Sara Thornton with a stare, which she must have suspected.

She stood like a statue, with her face

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half averted, while she seemed to take in the commotion which had followed Madam's fall.

"What has happened to Madam?" I asked.

Her lips seemed to move, but no words fell from them.

"This may be something serious," I continued, moving forward, when the hand of Sara Thornton clutched my arm.

"No!" she cried, as her fingers seemed to sink into my flesh. "For God's sake, go not out there, Mr. Taverny. It's a part of the play."

"A part of what play?"

"You are in the dark, and yet you should not be. I'm sorry for you, Mr. Taverny. I would have warned you, but it was too late."

"You would have warned me of what?" cried I.

"Of what has happened. You went straight to the net. You have been caught. Look yonder. Do you know the man who is standing by the lilies, with his hands resting on the table?"

I leaned forward breathlessly. Sara Thornton gripped my arm as if to hold me back.

"You know him, I see!" said her voice at my ear.

"Yes! yes!" cried I. "It is the master of ceremonies in the house in Holden square—the man with whom I made that infamous bargain!"

I looked once more into the face of Sara Thornton. She did not speak, but her face was wreathed in smiles and I felt my blood run in burning waves to my finger tips.

CHAPTER VII.

SARA THORNTON.

The man whom I had so suddenly discovered seemed to vanish into thin air.

That he was the mysterious person of Holden square I did not doubt.

Sara Thornton did not speak again, having gone over to where Madam Wray lay on the rich sofa. She returned to say that the sudden indisposition of the mistress of the mansion had passed away and that she was herself once more.

She made no allusion to the person for whom my eyes were searching the gay throng.

"Madam is subject to heart trouble," she remarked with a glance toward the person whom she had named. "I suppose the heat and the excitement brought on the attack. She is quite herself again. It's a brilliant party, don't you think, Mr. Taverny?"

"It is a compliment to Madam," said I, and once more my gaze wandered toward the lily stand, where I had seen the bane of my existence.

"Do you know the gentleman who stood by the flowers yonder?" I asked.

The woman gave a sudden start.

"I have seen him," she answered vaguely.

"A friend of Madam's?"

"I cannot say. At least he is here and that would seem to answer your question." But it did not. I was far from satisfied.

A little silence fell between us.

"I do not appear to have satisfied your curiosity," the woman continued with a smile.

"You have not," I answered with spirit. "I am interested in the man who has vanished as if the floor has opened and swallowed him."

"Ah! I wish I could enlighten you, Mr. Taverny," said Sara Thornton.

"I stand ready to be enlightened," looking her fairly in the eye. "That person greatly interests me."

She toyed with her fan, and her gaze dropped to the carpet at her feet.

Why had this woman, whom I but faintly knew, sought me out? What was her design?

At this moment there was a little flutter in the throng about Madam, and I cast my eyes thither. I saw the handsome mistress of the mansion rise from the sofa and stand erect as the crowd fell back. What a dazzling, superb creature she was, just fifty, with a regal form which, when arrayed in the fashionable garb of the present day, was set off to grand advantage.

"Madam is splendid tonight," said Sara Thornton with a glance at me.

"She outdoes herself for our benefit."

"Do you know that she contemplates a trip to the continent?"

I did not know, and, in fact, did not care. I was not interested in her movements and she might visit the Pole provided she could get there for all I cared.

Eager to get another look at the man who had vanished, I made a move toward the center of the room when the hand of Sara Thornton fell lightly but detainingly upon my sleeve.

"Am I such poor company that you would leave me?" she said with one of her arch looks.

"You are never poor company," was my reply, at which she flushed a little.

She drew me back into the mass of palms till I could hardly see the gossiping throng beyond, and motioning to a velvet sofa, bade me sit down.

"Mr. Taverny," said she, "you may be like myself tonight—a surprised guest."

I assured her that the invitation to attend the soiree was one of the surprises of my life.

"I have not penetrated to Madam's circle for some time," she went on vivaciously. "Indeed, there has been a little barrier between us and I am unable to guess why I have been invited hither."

"Then," said I, "then we are on an equal footing."

"Mrs. Wray has strange notions at times," she went on. "I know but few of her guests tonight. There are people here whose lives are somewhat shrouded in mystery."

I started. I wondered if she meant me.

"For instance," she resumed, parting the palms with her hand, "you see yonder the girl who is inhaling the perfume of that tropical rose?"

"I know her not."

"Her career is surrounded by mystery."

"In what way?"

"That is one of the secrets she keeps from the world. I believe every life has its closed chapter."

"Has yours?" I ventured, and that moment the face before me went white.

"Why not mine?" she exclaimed, suddenly recovering. "And why not yours, Mr. Taverny?"

"I confess to one mystery at least," said I, narrowly watching her.

She let the palms fall back. [illegible]

I remembered what Glidden had told me about Sara Thornton, that he selected her for my wife, and now was it not possible that our presence at the soiree was his work?

I longed for a glimpse of Glidden, who had left me not long before, but he did not reward me.

"You sometimes see the city by gaslight!" I suddenly resumed.

"I, Mr. Taverny?"

"Why not? It is a lady's privilege."

"You mystify me," she exclaimed, but having started off on the new track, I kept boldly at it.

"You are acquainted in Holden square, I presume?"

"I know the place."

"And the tenants of No. 99?"

I fully expected to see the woman spring to her feet and make a general denial, but to my astonishment she did not move, but regarded me with a little smile.

"Number 99 is empty now, I believe."

"Empty?"

"Yes."

"Since when?"

"I cannot answer definitely," was the reply.

"You have been keeping tab on those people?"

"Perhaps," and she lapsed into silence.

"Would you mind giving me a little information concerning the late tenants of 99?"

"Why would you know, Mr. Taverny?" and her gaze became fixed upon my face.

"I have a curiosity to know," I answered, evasively. "It is a pardonable one, Mrs. Thornton."

"I am not going to satisfy that curiosity to its full," she said. "It is not within my province to do so. But the late tenants of No. 99 Holden square are mysterious people."

I laughed, at which the face of the woman at my side went crimson.

"One mystery after another," she said. "I think, Mr. Taverny, we should fence no longer."

"Agreed," and I waited for her to proceed.

But instead of speaking again she arose and stood before me, her hand toying with her silver fan, while her gaze, for a moment, wandered toward the throng beyond the palms.

I could not but admire the beautiful woman who thus stood in my presence, a pronounced brunette with dark and lustrous eyes, a magnificent figure and a poise that would have captivated the most cynical.

Once she seemed on the eve of speaking again, but as suddenly her eyes roved away and she remained silent.

"You have not told me," I said quietly. "We have agreed to fence no longer. One mystery in exchange for another. Shall it be so?"

My words seemed to call her back to the present.

"Give me time, Mr. Taverny. I spoke without thought. You will pardon me, I trust. Have you found Milly?"

I was nearly taken from my feet concerning this question about the missing maid? What did Sara Thornton know about her?

"We have not found Milly," said I. "The girl went away mysteriously."

"She could not do otherwise," was the reply. "Milly means well and she is a good girl."

"You have seen Milly?"

The superb head dropped in a slight nod, that was all.

At this moment the soft strains of the concealed harpists began to float through the room, and Sara Thornton stepped back.

"They are moving to the diningroom," she said with a swift glance at me. "We should not be laggards, Mr. Taverny."

I arose and offered her my arm.

"There they go," she said with a slight gesture. "Madam leads, you see, Mr. Taverny. Your bride looks beautiful tonight. I think I shall have to congratulate you."

"My bride?" the words leaped unbidden from my throat, and my eyes searched the moving procession, but there was no reply, and the next moment we were in line.

CHAPTER VIII.

WARNED.

It was in vain that I searched the faces at the royal table for the one which had called forth Sara Thornton's last words.

My mysterious wife in the house? The woman whose hand I had held through the marriage ceremony again almost within reach of mine? The thought sent my blood like a lava current through my brain. I watched Sara Thornton, hoping her gaze would lead me to the person to whom she had alluded, but she was as sharp as the next one.

I dared not press her now for an explanation, but I resolved to do so the moment the affair was over.

It was a brilliant feast, such an one as a woman like Madam Wray knew how to dispense. Every face came under my observation. I searched them all with a curiosity which I had never known till that eventful night.

The table was deserted by the last lingerer by midnight. I arose with my curiosity unsatisfied.

Sara Thornton arose at the same time and, hastily excusing herself, left me to my own reflections.

Suddenly I heard a voice at my elbow, and, turning, looked into the face of Glidden, the detective. I sprang toward him with a cry of relief.

"You've met her, old boy?" he said with one of his smiles. "She's worth the hunting, eh?"

"Sara Thornton?"

"Yes, the divine Sara."

"Come!" cried I. "You know the truth."

"Which does not detract an iota from Mrs. Thornton's beauty."

"I'll admit that, Glidden. Where have you been?"

"Not taking an inventory of Mrs. Wray's diamonds," he replied. "I have been looking after my own business."

"Ah! you have a new trail, then?"

"The one which brought me back from Europe."

"Did you hope to find any clew here?"

"Yes, and I never fail."

Queer words these, and with the last one Glidden's gaze roved toward the throng which had again assembled in the main parlor, where the larger part of it had gathered about the mistress of the mansion.

[illegible] tonight," said I, laying my

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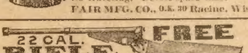

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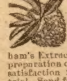

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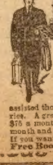

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GENTLE JABS.

Many a "good fellow" makes a bad finish.

Poets have many trials—but few are convicted.

It's easy for a busy man to keep out of mischief.

Fancies have more to do with love-making than facts.

And many a cheerful dentist looks down in the mouth.

If wishes were horses there would soon be a hay famine.

A wise man says just enough and then puts the lid on.

This old world looks pretty good to the healthy person.

The chorus girl with a pretty foot always has a kick coming.

Probably the shabbiest thing in the world is wornout welcome.

The airs of a self-made man are mostly of the fresh or hot brand.

How much louder it sounds when some one else slams the door!

The milkmaid expects to see a cowhide when milking time comes.

A man may be a power in financial circles and still be on the square.

The cigarette-smoking girl never shows up in a bachelor's pipe dreams.

Better a girl who chews gum than one who is always chewing the rag.

People waste a lot of valuable time looking for things where they are not.

Ever notice that it takes less to make a fat woman laugh than a thin one?

It is not difficult for a young man to earn a good living if he has a rich dad.

His satanic majesty seldom wastes any time trying to tempt a busy man.

No, Cordelia, it isn't called "common sense" because it is so common.

A man's opinions are subject to change—save the good one he has of himself.

Even the man who admits that he caught only one fish may lie about its weight.

A prude is sometimes a person who noses around for something to get shocked at.

And lots of people seem to go to church for the purpose of picking flaws in the sermon.

Anyway, spinsters and old bachelors always agree as to how children should be brought up.

A woman shouldn't be foolish about her age. It's often better to tell the truth than have it guessed at.

After it is all over the average man wastes a lot of time telling what he would do if he had another chance.

The optimist cheers, but the pessimist saves his brain for the purpose of letting out a calamity howl later on.

In less than a week after a bride lays aside her wedding gown she begins to wonder how she will look in black.

How absurd it is that the young man in

"The tenant of the house in Holden square—the man with whom I made that infamous compact."

"I wouldn't call a compact infamous that netted me ten thousand dollars," he said with a humorous toss of his head.

I hardly knew how to answer Glidden.

"So you really saw that man?" said he.

"There's no doubt of it."

"And he is here still?"

"I cannot say. He may have gone. I did not notice him at the table."

"Suppose we take a look," suggested Glidden, and at once we set out upon our mission.

It was destined to be a fruitless quest for, though we explored every nook of Mrs. Wray's sumptuous abode, the man who had so startled me after being pointed out by Sara Thornton was not to be seen.

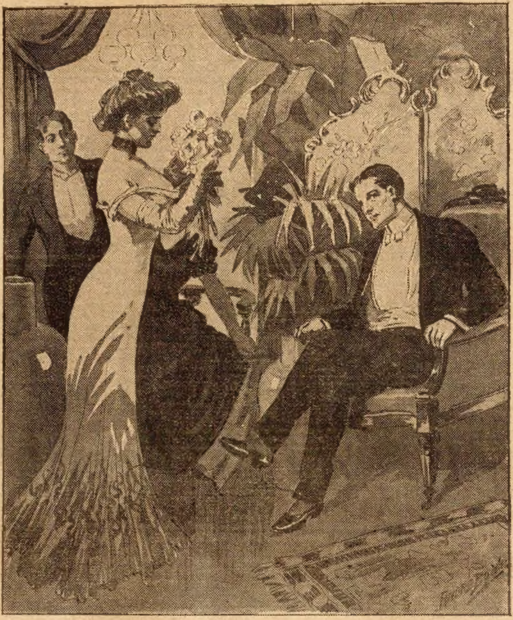
"He must have taken his departure," said I.

"Perhaps he recognized you."

"I cannot say that he saw me—certainly not when I noticed him, for the palms concealed me."

"Sara seems to know the personage."

"Undoubtedly," said I, "I failed to draw her out. She is in some manner connected with my startling matrimonial venture."



She was beautiful.

"I—I cannot say, Taverny. We will go back to the little room. Sara is not in this one," and we turned back once more.

From that moment till I quitted the mansion my stay became absolute torture. Sara Thornton had vanished after the supper and I knew not when she withdrew.

I could not get over the thought or suspicion that the woman whom I had married was one of Madam's guests. The thought became irritating and the more I harbored it the more I became resolved to force the secret from Mrs. Thornton.

But "the divine Sara," as Glidden called her, was beyond reach of me for the present, and in the wee sma' hours I went down the broad steps of the Wray mansion with the early winds of morning on my cheeks and the mystery growing deeper than ever.

No one heard me enter the house in Misery Row. Glidden had bidden me good night long before and departed without divulging in the least anything about the trail he was on nor the clew which he had picked up at the soiree.

It was no sleep for me with the first flushes of a new day coming in at my windows.

I threw myself into a chair and took a cigar for comfort and to assist cogitation.

The house was still enough. Not a sound came to my ears, not even from the street, for the great city, as yet, was not awake.

As my gaze roved around the room, which I hoped soon to vacate for better quarters, I felt that something awaited the finding. It seemed to me that the premises had been visited during my absence, yet I could see no signs of it.

"Some one's been here," I exclaimed, rising and crossing the room.

I went to the mantel and looked it over. I even ransacked the wardrobe and at last came back to the table.

All at once my eyes fell upon a bit of paper that protruded from beneath the cloth on the table. I leaned forward and jerked it from its hiding place.

It was not so much as sealed, but fluttered open as the heat of my hand touched it.

"I knew it. Perhaps a note from Mrs. Gore—or from Milly."

In another moment I was holding the open paper before my distended eyes, which looked down upon the following:

"Mr. Miles Taverny—You are asking questions already. Beware! The doom of the compact-breaker is death. In silence and discreetness lies your future welfare."

It was unsigned, but I knew from whence had come the warning.

I was still in the shadow of the cabal. The spies of those who had drawn me into the startling marriage were at my heels and I was to be sacrificed if I questioned any one for a solution of the mystery.

The handwriting I had seen before. It was the same in which the reply to my answer to the advertisement had been traced.

"It is doom if I persist in seeking the truth, eh?" I exclaimed, as if the author of the warning actually stood before me. "Death let it be, then!"

The paper fell from my grasp upon the cloth and quivered there.

The light grew brighter as it sifted into the little room and the faint echo of my words was all the sound I heard.

Suddenly catching up the paper again I went over to the window and held it up to the light. My guess was confirmed, for it was the same paper upon which the first letter had been written.

As I looked up from the paper and across the street, just growing light, a man moved from an area and walked off. The area was exactly opposite my lodgings.

"The spy!" I cried, springing back. "I am still under espionage by the marriage fiends!"

I thought for a moment of pursuing the spy, but knowing that he could escape ere I reached the pavement, I turned back from the door and dropped into the chair again.

The morning advanced till I at last heard noises in the house.

Mrs. Gore was awake.

Wondering if she had any news of Milly, the fugitive, I determined to question her. My hand was on the doorknob when it opened and Mrs. Gore herself confronted me.

Her face was a question, for it was white and told me that but little sleep had visited her eyes for many hours.

"Milly?" she cried the moment she saw me.

I held the door open for her and she came in, almost falling exhausted into the chair.

"I have learned nothing of Milly," said I, but continued before she could speak: "I have heard of something which may give me a clew."

She clasped her hands in hope, but the light which suddenly shone in her eyes vanished.

"What did the girl want forgiven?" she asked. "Do you know, Mr. Taverny?"

I shook my head.

"I think I do. Milly was something of an eavesdropper. I caught her at it several times and she always expressed sorrow. She may have listened at your door and, ashamed to confront you afterward, thought it best to go away."

"She left nothing behind but the note?"

"Nothing else."

With this Mrs. Gore went out and once more I was alone. The first postman left a letter in the household box for me. It was from Sara Thornton, and must have been posted just after her disappearance from Madam Wray's mansion.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Taverny. Your bride was superb last night.

"SARA THORNTON."

That was all. Would I never reach the light?

(Continued next week.)

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In Strange Seas;

--Or--

The Flying Dutchman's Daughter

By William H. Manning

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Begun in No. 9, February 26. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

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CHAPTER X.

WHAT IT WAS.

MY MIND had been befogged by the unexpected attack, but the very sharpness of the danger served to clear my wits, and with that I grew more active. One of my wandering hands encountered hair, or beard, and I closed my fingers and jerked so violently that good came of it. The owner of the growth was pulled toward me, and a murmur of pain accompanied the motion. Better yet, by upsetting his poise I loosened the bonds that had been gripping me, and it was a fresh lease upon life.

Summoning all my strength I bounded lustily, drove a fist into the face of the man nearest me, and struggled from the bed. All this was done in a twinkling, and its result was to disturb my assailants greatly. My half-applied bonds dropped to the floor, and I was, in a sense, a free man. Then I became a very active man. There was enough light to show three persons before me, and I went at them wildcat-like.

In days past I had learned to use my fists. I used them now. Blow after blow I sent out heavily, and the opposition was less than I had reason to expect. Driving onward I banged my way through the trio, and I did more. My own movements and theirs made a great tumult, and I was dimly conscious of movements in other rooms, like men springing out of bed. Near at hand, too, was a shout from one of these risers.

Then the opposition melted wholly. There was a rush for the window, and my foes tried their best to get away with speed. With so narrow an aperture it was not easy, and I might have stayed at least one, but, somehow, I felt disinclined.

Stranger that I was, I seemed to feel the simplest way the best.

My door was flung open, and I recognized the bulk, rather than the face of Hendrick Vanderdecken. The young giant had a massive force even when at rest.

"What is it, captain?" he demanded excitedly.

"A small tempest on land," I replied, trying to make light of the affair. "I'm sorry to disturb anybody, but I was attacked in bed, so I naturally defended myself."

"Attacked in bed?" came in the heavy tones of the elder Vanderdecken, and the Flying Dutchman was with us. "Who was it, and where are they?"

"Gone through the window."

"Attacked!" he repeated. "This is the work of Tony Mossett and his ill brood."

"Ay," added Hendrick. "It is like them."

"A light, my son!" directed the lawgiver.

Hendrick darted out, but presently returned with the lamp. Its rays fell upon a bed which gave plain evidence of the struggle, but it was about the only sign. My host asked for particulars, and I told him all I knew. He listened with a dark face and sober manner.

"It was the pirates," he repeated.

The charge was not made with good spirit, inmates of the house, I first of all went out- and it came to me that he did not believe what he said, but I let it pass.

"I don't see what they have to gain by such an act," remonstrated Hendrick, rubbing his blond head. "Even if they killed the captain, what good would it have done them?"

"Great men are always hated by the evil," Vanderdecken hastily announced. "Who so great in our land as the captain of the ship?"

"My ship!" I exclaimed. "They may attack that!"

"Not they!" laughed Hendrick. "We set a pikarro near your craft with some of our best men on board. The ship is safe."

"Even so," agreed Vanderdecken. "All our thoughts may well lie here."

He made some further investigation, though it amounted to nothing, and then suggested that his son pass the rest of the night with me, but I objected. Feeling able to care for myself, now I was warned, I did not aspire to be guarded. We talked for a while, and then my companions left me and I prepared for bed again. As I was doing this I noticed something unusual on the floor, and stooping, I picked it up. It was an unusual find.

I held a wisp of long, flaxen hair, or as I speedily decided, a strand of beard. In brief, it was what I had plucked from the face of my most zealous assailant.

It was rather striking evidence. Vanderdecken had been anxious to lay the blame at the door of the pirates, but they were now, in part, at least, proved innocent. All were young men, and all had beards which, because of their age, were short. My trophy was all of eighteen inches long.

"No pirates in this!" I muttered. "I've plucked a middle-aged man, and that means he is one high in the councils of the people. The ill will that Mynheer Opzoomer has started against me is warm in the flesh. The attack was from his faction, and maybe he was here, too. Seems to me I am marked for slaughter!"

Long I sat on the edge of the bed, holding the wisp of beard and meditating. Vanderdecken was my friend, but some of his chief associates were bound to dispose of me, and that meant that my life was menaced from a powerful quarter.

The pirates were children, compared with the mighty Opzoomer.

deciding that it would do night out. Being astir before the regular side and walked to the shore. The safety of the Cousin Polly had been heavy on my mind, but when I had a look at the offing I saw the clipper craft riding at her anchor and one of my men pacing her deck, while a native pikarro was lying halfway between. All was well in that quarter, so I returned.

The family and I met at the table calmly, and the little talk concerning my night adventure was unanimously to the effect that it was from the pirates. I made light of it, for which Mynheer Vanderdecken seemed grateful, but, kind and genial as he was, there was a deeper shadow on his face.

After eating was over he took me to his private room.

"Captain Stanford," he said, "it has occurred to me that I have not yet told you the story of my people. I think you would be glad to hear it?"

"Most surely I would," I replied eagerly.

"You shall have it now. Know, then, that in the year 1707 the full-rigged ship Zuyder Zee sailed from Amsterdam, Holland, bound for the Pacific Ocean. Her captain was Jan Vanderdecken, my grandfather. The purpose of the voyage was to explore the west coast of South America, with the view of founding missionary settlements there, and, for that purpose, seven women were on board. Her cargo was largely merchant goods, cloth for the wear of both sexes, as it was purposed to equip the islanders there with civilized garments. This was the idea of the missionaries. Also, there was a great store of food, with spices, and grains, and the like, all looking to the needs of man.

"All went well until the Zuyder Zee was off Cape Horn, when trouble arose. She met with rough, baffling winds, and was beset with snow, hail, and sleet, and a dreadful struggle with preverse nature took place. I hear that it is always vexatious weather in that section, but nothing like the hardships of the Zuyder Zee was ever known before. Several times the point of difficulty was almost passed, and then the winds hauled, gales beat upon the ship, she was driven back, and from her course, and what was won one day was lost the next.

"Three weeks, as my information goes, the fruitless struggle went on, and it was a period of cold, danger, and suffering. Twice Captain Vanderdecken spoke another ship, both equally beset. What became of them I don't know, but the Zuyder Zee never rounded the Cape.

"A terrific gale broke, the ship was the sport of the storm, she was driven long and hard, and, in brief, after six days of ceaseless fighting to keep her afloat, the noble craft, then far off her course, was driven ashore and left a helpless wreck, her mainmast snapped at the partners, and foremast gone halfway up, while the whole garboard strake was a sieve. Repairs would have been possible ordinarily, but she had so driven upon the reefs off what we call Cape Grief that no human power could float her again.

"Add that every boat had carried away from the davits and you will see that the wreck was complete.

"Well, Captain Stanford, our people did not find this an uninhabited land. Other people were there, victims of a singular catastrophe dating fifty years before, or such a matter. This other people had started civilization, having crops in the then fertile ground, and, having originally carried a cargo partly of live stock, horses, cattle and sheep, were here, and houses had been built.

"These strangers had come here much as Captain Vanderdecken's party had come, being caught in a great gale, driven into the warm ocean stream from the volcano, and so shipwrecked.

"The two parties fraternized and, from that time, lived together, though only the Zuyder Zee division now has living descendants.

"For many years life here was endurable. The volcano sent its heated water current to warm this little belt, crops flourished, and the best was made of the exile."

"Could not a new vessel be built and departure from this land made?" I interrupted at this point.

"No. The one ship carpenter on board was lost in the gale, and though such an effort was made, nothing came of it. The surviving men could sail a ship, but not build one that was seaworthy. True, various small craft were built, much like our pikarros—this name is from the first settlers here—and small parties went out, but they never came back, and we found some of them drowned, brought back by the ocean stream. No, our people never succeeded at ship-building, and after the first generation we had no sailor among us.

"Before the first Vanderdecken, my grandfather died, he established a system here by which his descendants became limited rulers. Thus, I am, as my father was before me, the head of the people, the so-called lawgiver, though this is an idle word, really, as the so-called patroons are practically my equals. Also, I bear the title of Flying Dutchman—does that seem odd to you?"

"It surely does," I replied.

"You shall hear why. I have told you that the first Vanderdecken, captain of the Zuyder Zee, spoke two vessels when off Cape Horn. One of them he spoke twice, on successive days. The first time he gave his name, and his home port. The second time, driving within sight of the stranger in the gray mist, he was greeted with a mocking, frivolous, impertinent shout from the other deck.

"'Hello! here's the Flying Dutchman!' was the taunting cry.

"It was the word of an ill-bred, saucy blackguard, a reckless man before the mast, whose ignorance was his only excuse, and some of my grandfather's crew were angry, but the captain took it calmly, and when, later, he was driven to a safe land, he remembered and said, 'we flew before the blast, watched over by the God of the mariner. I will adopt the name; from this time I am the Flying Dutchman.'

"Sir, he kept the title to his death, and so did my father, and since I became lawgiver, I, too, am the hereditary Flying Dutchman."

I was listening intently, and now I interrupted.

"You speak of the God of the mariner. Was Captain Vanderdecken a religious man?"

"Deeply so!"

"Was he, when battling with the winds off Cape Horn, never tempted to complain bitterly?"

"Never! He was in the hands of Providence, and he trusted to his Divine Master to bring him safely through."

My companion reached out his hand and touched a well-worn Bible, and during his brief silence I had chance to analyze the ancient legend of the Flying Dutchman. The name had been applied scoffingly in a moment of idle drifting, and, no doubt, it pleased the fancy of the crew of the other ship. When that ship reached port it made a good story to tell, and from that time the tale went on. Vanderdecken had never sworn he would round the Cape in spite of man and God, and he had never been seen there in after years, but falsehood and superstition had kept the story alive. Let a ship be seen in the wild tempests off the Cape and jest or cowardly fear made it into the Flying Dutchman at once, and hundreds of fok'sles echoed to the yarn.

At last I knew the truth, and saw on what a fragile thread the legend so long popular on shipboard had been hung.

"We have all been God-fearing people until of late," Vanderdecken resumed, after a pause. "Discord among us began with the coming of the man who now leads our so-called pirates. I mean Tony Mossett. That man was a sailor on some ship, he was wrecked, drifted on a raft, and so was borne here. Since he came he has led some of our young men into evil ways, for he is evil himself. Really, of course, they are not pirates, but they are maliciously harmful to us, and we use that word, remembering it from the lips of Vanderdecken the Great, first of our line."

Again a pause, after which he added:

"All we know of the world we have by tradition from him."

I was silent. It was this, the ignorance of real life, and the malgin influence of superstition, that most threatened my future. With these things dominant, intelli-

(Continued on page ten.)

FREE
CATARRH
TREATMENT

My Offer of Feb. 12 in The Chicago Ledger Brings So Much Joy.

In the Feb. 12th issue of The Chicago Ledger I made the following offer: That I would give Catarrh Treatments absolutely free of charge to be distributed among the readers of The Saturday Blade. That offer has been received with so much satisfaction, so many grateful letters have come to me from it, that my heart is filled with joy.

Therefore, I have decided to repeat the offer and am making this announcement. *I will give away, absolutely free of charge, 250 more of my famous Catarrh treatments* that treatment which I have proved to be the best that was ever formulated for Catarrh and allied ailments, that treatment which has cured thousands of suffering ones, after everything else has failed.

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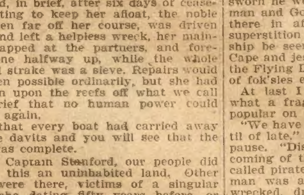

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The Poor Bard.

"Cheer up, Homer," consoled the wife of the struggling poet. "Surely some of these days something with your name to it will live."

"Yes," grumbled the bard, as he surveyed another batch of rejected manuscript, "but I bet if it does it will be a promise-to-pay note."

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Dismal Dawson—Here's a funny advertisement: "Bathe in comfort." Now wot do yous tink of dat?

Hungry Higgins—Oh, dat wouldn't be ez bad ez bathin' in soapsuds.

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HOW HE MADE IT.

"Joe will make his mark some day,"
Said his father with delight;
He did—but in an illiterate way,
For he never learned to write.

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

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One of the High Lights.

Fred—Has she any property?

Tom—I should say so. Why, she is so rich she can even afford to be a kleptomaniac.

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Have you tried various remedies for diseases peculiar to our sex? Suppositories and cones are mostly cocoa butter, olive oil or other fats. They can't cure you. Medical Science has discovered that these fats and oils prevent the action of the medicine. You should know why. I want to explain it to you. And I want you to try a remedy which will cure—which contains no oils or fats—just pure medicine that acts quickly and surely. I will send a liberal trial, and the explanatory booklet absolutely free. Address Ella Howard, Box 435, South Bend, Ind.

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Mrs. Slimdiet—The city water company has raised my rates.

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You can easily earn $5 to $10 a day taking orders for our Stylish, Made-to-Measure clothes—many agents earn more. No money or experience necessary—we teach you the business & back you with our capital.

SUITS $9.00 up PANTS $2.50 up

EXPRESS PREPAID

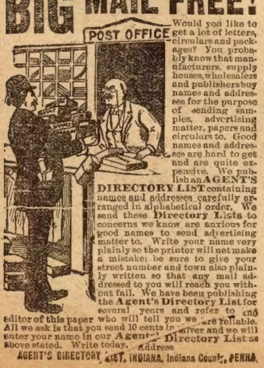
$5.00 TO $10.00 A DAY

Every garment made to measure in latest city style—fit and workmanship guaranteed. One Hustling Agent wanted in every town. Exclusive territory. Write for agent's outfit FREE

THE PROGRESS TAILORING CO.
125 Harrison Street, - Chicago

GREAT MONEY MAKER FOR AGENTS

Sell Magnetic Combs and get rich; agents wild with success. They remove dandruff; stop falling hair; RELIEVE HEADACHE, never break. Send 2c stamp for sample. PROF. LONG, 757 Ash St., PEKIN, ILL.



BIG MAIL FREE!

Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agents' Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address

AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST, INDIANA, Indiana County, PENNA.

Affection of a Dog.

"The affection of a dog is truly a wonderful thing," the naturalist mused. "Even when mistreated by his master the faithful animal will cling to him."

"Yes, that's a fact," sighed a man with patched trousers. "I know it's a fact, because I, as master of a bulldog, kicked him a few days ago, and the brute clung to me for a full half-hour."

Had to Be Done.

"Don't you know, little boy that it is wrong to try to shoot your neighbor's cats?"

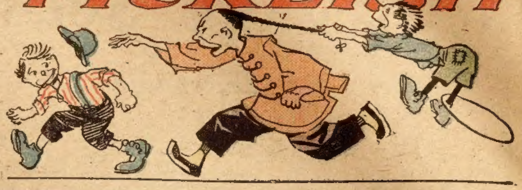
"I got to, ma'am. Maw won't let me pizen 'em."

Helping Themselves.

Mrs. Church—Are your children being brought up to help themselves?

Mrs. Gotham—Oh, yes; I never lock the cookie jar!

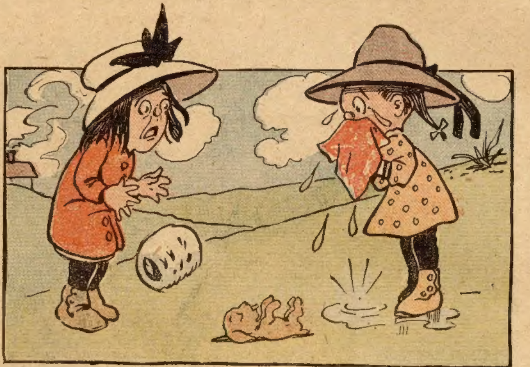
TICKLISH



Couldn't Help It.

"How did you come to be a crook?"
"Just followed my natural bent."

MY GOODNESS.



"What's this? dear Jane," Marie cried. "What's happened to poor Sport?"
Said Jane—He got run over by my careless train of thought.

Thoroughly Enjoyed.

"I saw you at the musicale yesterday afternoon. I'm so sorry I couldn't get a chance to speak to you. Did you enjoy my daughter's singing?"

"Yes, very much."

"I thought her accompanist played awfully loud."

"She did. Back where I sat the sound of the piano was the only thing we could hear."

How It Seemed to Him.

She (with much indignation)—It was cowardly enough for the creature to sandbag you, but to creep up behind, as he did, proves that he was a most abject coward!

The Victim (faintly)—Perhaps he was a coward, but it seemed to me at the time that he possessed lots of sand.

A Tactful Newspaper Man.

"Is he what you would call a first-class newspaper man?"

"I should say so. When the 'end-of-the-world' scare was at its height he had two editorials written—one to publish if it did come off, the other if it didn't."

Better Still.

Said She—Wouldn't it be grand if we could only see ourselves as others see us?

Said He —Well, hardly; but it would be grand if we could make others see us as we see ourselves.

Kind That Counts.

He—Then you are not one of those girls who likes to listen to soft nothings?

She—No, indeed. I prefer soft somethings that have a business ring.

Incorrigible.

He asked so many questions that day that he finaly wore out his mother's patience.

"Robert," she cried, "if you ask me another question I shall put you to bed without your supper.

Robert promptly asked another and was packed off to bed. Later his mother repented. After all, asking questions was the only way he could acquire knowledge; so she tiptoed upstairs, knelt beside Robert's bed, and told him she was sorry.

"Now, dear," she said, "if you want to ask one more question before you go to sleep, ask it now, and I will try to answer."

Robert thought for a moment, then said: "Mother, how far can a cat spit?"

What Struck Him.

"Did anything about the defendant strike you as being out of the ordinary?" asked the judge of the plaintiff in a case of assault and battery.

"Yes, your honor," was the reply.

"What was it?" queried the judge.

"His fist," answered the plaintiff.

Printed at Last.

Mrs. Boston—Is it not remarkable? The writings of a man who lived before the pyramids were built, have just been discovered, and published to the world.

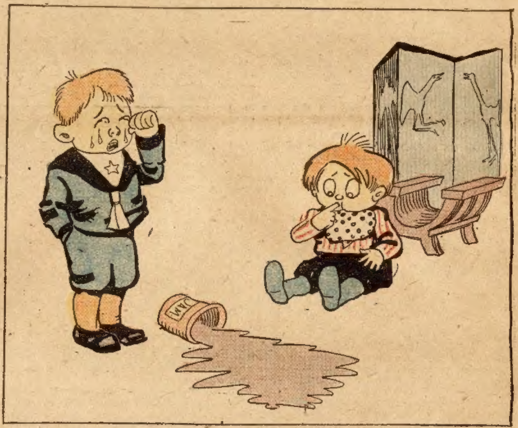
Struggling Author—Which magazine did he send them to?

Indefinite.

The prospective passenger, after he had carefully inspected the airship, went up to the captain, "What are your rates?" he asked.

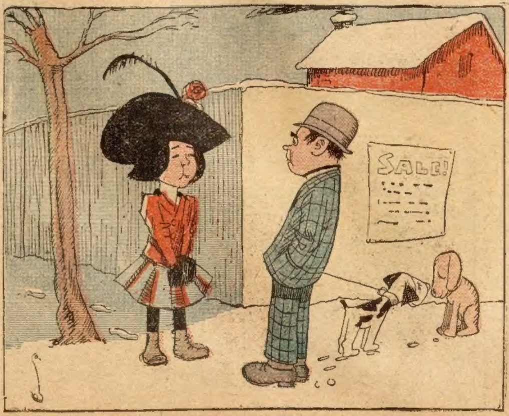
"Fifty cents up," replied the captain.

JUVENILES.



Tommy—I'm gwan t' tell on you fer spillin' the jam.
Gerald—If you do I'll tell on you for breaking your drum.
Tommy—Yes; but no one'll b'lieve you after I ruin yer reputation.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.



Jimmie—I got a measle.
Mamie—Aw, you mean the measles!
Jimmie—I mean w'ot I says! Our fambly's so big that we kin only have one measle apiece!

Alcohol Is a Preservative.

Alcohol is recognized the world over as the proper, most efficient and wholesome preserver of medicinal compounds, and while some journalists try to alarm the world by the cry that patent "medicines contain more alcohol than beer," they neglect to state that proprietary medicines are taken in doses from a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful, while beer is a beverage that is consumed in quantities from a glass to several quarts a day.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound contains only 18% alcohol, simply enough to preserve the roots and herbs from which it is made, and may be relied upon by every woman in the land as a reliable, honest and sure remedy for the ills peculiar to her sex.

An Improved Definition.

Scott—A bohemian is a chap who borrows a dollar from you and then invites you out to lunch with him.

Mott—Wrong. A bohemian is a fellow who invites himself to lunch with you and borrows a dollar.

Heard in the Parlor.

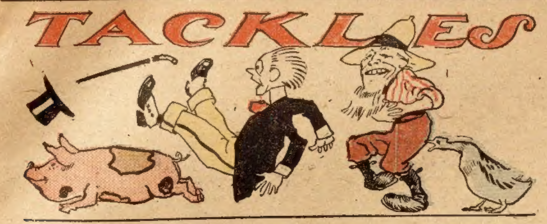
"That lump of coal which just went on the fire has a grudge against me," remarked the tongs.

"The in-grate!" exclaimed the scuttle, indignantly.

His Eligibility.

Bache—How came the people in your town to select Leaguer for judge? He isn't even a lawyer.

Stoyppe—No; but he's the county's best baseball umpire.



WHAT'S THE USE

Sticking To a Habit When It Means Discomfort?

Old King Coffee knocks subjects out tolerably flat at times, and there is no possible doubt of what did it. A Mich. woman gives her experience:

"I used to have liver trouble nearly all the time and took medicine which relieved me only for a little while. Then every once in a while I would be suddenly doubled up with an awful agony in my stomach. It seemed as though every time I took a breath I would die. No one could suffer any more and live.

"Finally I got down so sick with catarrh of the stomach that I could not turn over in bed, and my stomach did not digest even milk. The doctor finally told me that if I did not give up drinking coffee I would surely die, but I felt I could not give it up.

"However, Husband brought home a package of Postum and it was made strictly according to directions. It was the only thing that would stay on my stomach, and I soon got so I liked it very much.

"Gradually I began to get better, and week by week gained in strength and health. Now I am in perfect condition, and I am convinced that the whole cause of my trouble was coffee drinking, and my getting better was due to leaving off coffee and taking Postum.

"A short time ago I tasted some coffee and found, to my astonishment, that I did not care anything about it. I never have to take medicine any more. I hope you will use this letter for the benefit of those suffering from the poisonous effects of coffee."

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Mother's Warning.

"Now, my dear," said the anxious mother, "this is the eve of your coming-out party and I want to warn you about the men. Listen to what they say, but don't believe more than half they tell you."

"Very well, mamma, replied the fair debutante, "but which half shall I believe?"

BIG COMPANY DISTRIBUTES BIG MEDICAL BOOK FREE.

The well known Pierce Co. of Buffalo, is advertising its business by giving away free of charge copies of the "People's Common Sense Medical Adviser." This famous book has 1,008 pages with engravings and color plates and the copies of the new revised edition that are given away are bound in cloth. This book treats of Anatomy, Hygiene, Medicine, Mother and Babe and every family ought to grasp this opportunity to get a copy free by writing to Dr. R. V. Pierce at the address given in the advertisement on page 14 of this paper.

The Same Look.

Wedderly—They say that a man and his wife grow to look alike after they have been married a few years. Now, my wife and I have been married ten years; do you think we look alike?

Singleton—Yes, indeed! You both seem to have the same sad expression.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

At the Dinner Table.

"Our splendid cook left today and I had to take her place," said Mrs. Staggers. "I hope I shall be successful in imitating her."

"I certainly hope you will be successful in following in her footsteps," suggestively remarked old man Staggers as he chewed on a crisp-boiled potato.

Suitable Role.

"Smoking cigarettes?" reprimanded the bystander. "Well, you are just killing your ambitions. You can never grow up and be a stage singer if you smoke those things."

"Well," responded the street boy, as he blew another series of rings, "I can be the villain in a melodrama."

Suspicious.

"Yes, miss," boasted the chivalrous old colonel, "I was at the Battle of Chickamauga and was shot right here on top of the head. No one can dare say that I was up a tree during the fighting."

"Er—where were you, colonel?" asked the young hostess, innocently, "down a well?"

Divulging a Secret.

Maud—So he had the cheek to ask my age, did he? Well, what did you tell him?

Ethel—I told him I didn't know positively, but I thought you were just twenty-four on your thirtieth birthday.

The Reaction.

Ashley—A painter who was working in my house yesterday fell from the top of a twelve-foot ladder, landed on his heels and bumped his head on the ceiling.

Weigle—How was that possible?

Ashley—He was wearing rubber heels.

A Western Solon.

Prosecuting Attorney—Your Honor, the bull pup has gone and chawed up the court Bible.

Judge—Well, make the witness kiss the bull pup, then. We can't adjourn court for a week jest to hunt up a new Bible.

Swift Thinker.

Harker—You seem in a deep study. A penny for your thoughts, old man.

Bluffwood—Oh, I'm a rapid thinker and have 500 thoughts at once. Pass me over a five-spot.

PERHAPS THEY HAVE.

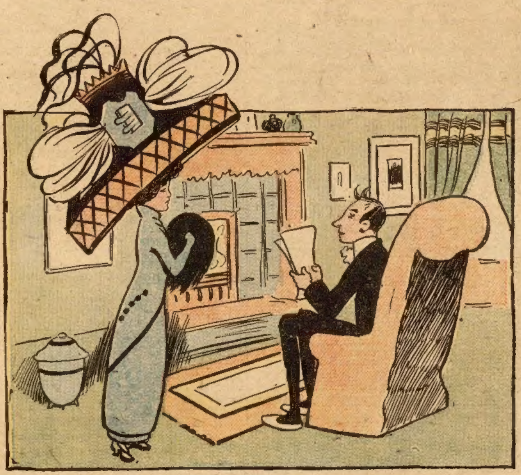
They tell us women have no minds,
  But, no matter what they say,
I'm sure they have, because, you see,
  They change 'em every day.

Suppressing the Feelings.

Squib—Professor Technic met my wife and is just raving over her music.

Squab—How rude; why couldn't he control his feelings, as the rest of us do?

A CAUTIOUS HUSBAND.



Mrs. Henpeck—John, what's your honest opinion of my new hat?

Mr. Henpeck—Don't ask me, Mary. You know you're much bigger and stronger than I am!

A Man of Law.

"What are they moving the church for?"

"Well, stranger, I'm mayor of these diggin's, an' I'm fer law enforcement. We've got an ordinance what says no saloon shall be nearer than three hundred feet from a church. I give 'em three days to move the church."

Crushing a Lazy Man.

"So he refused to let you marry his daughter?"

"No; but he imposed conditions that I cannot comply with."

"What are they?"

"Said I'd have to go to work first."

The Test.

"Is the pen really mightier than the sword?"

"Nothing to it. You don't see any homes for disabled poets."

Deceived.

"I have made a shrine of my heart and placed you there," he declared.

And she believed him, notwithstanding the fact that she weighed 183 pounds.

Deathless Devotion.

Kind Father—My dear, if you want a good husband, marry Mr. Goodheart. He really and truly loves you.

Daughter—Are you sure of that, pa?

Kind Father—Yes, indeed. I've been borrowing money of him for six months, and still he keeps coming.

Serving the Public.

"Have you ever done anything for the good of the community?" asked the solid citizen."

"Yes," replied the weary wayfarer; "I've just done thirty days."

An Empty Place.

"I don't believe he has an idea in his head."

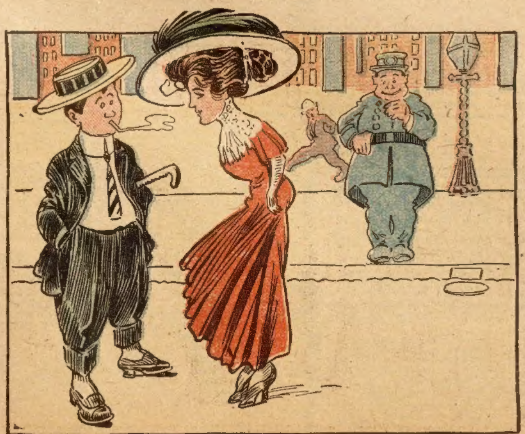
"If he had, it would make so much noise knocking about in there that he wouldn't be able to sleep nights."

An Indisputable Truth.

"I wish some one would endow a home for poor actors."

"Why? Some of the poorest actors draw the largest salaries."

OBVIOUS.



Harold—I saw an article in the paper yesterday entitled, "Have We Two Brains or One." What do you think about it?

Audley—Well, between you and me, I think we have only one.

AGENTS WANTED

POCKET $10 DAILY

AGENTS IT'S A CINCH. JUST HAND IT OUT TAKE THE MONEY

SEE THAT LOOP
AUTOMATIC STITCH SPACER
WAX END HERE
RIVETS HERE
LOADED HERE

New stunt. Farmers crazy over it—grab eagerly. Easiest money ever earned. Fact. It's great. Like getting money from home. Hurry. Get in the game. **Mend-a-Rip.** Hand sewing machine. Does finest, coarsest sewing; leather and tough material of all kinds. Rivets too. Easy to use—needed everywhere—everybody buys. Hilton, Mo., writes: **"Nothing to it.** Just hand them out like circus tickets. Money rolling in—send fifty more." Henson, Mont., says, **"Everybody buys.** Say it's finest thing out. **Sold 23 today.** This is fine." Guaranteed—no chance to lose. Does the business right. You can't fail. **Not sold in stores.** You've worked hard long enough. Get the easy money. Change to fascinating business—free to come and go. What's the use of plodding? Just start—then it's easy. **Make $1,000 to $2,000 this year** selling Mend-a-Rip.

IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT AWAITS YOU

Write for it today. Begin now. Success is great. You feel fine. Gets in your blood—gingers you up. Pretty soon easier to make big money than little. Cut loose! Break away! Don't stick to irksome tasks—long hours—bosses. We'll start you. We'll give you a boost—good territory. Write. We need Managers, Salesmen, Solicitors, Agents everywhere to appoint, control, take orders. **No money needed, just write a card.**

FOOTE MFG. CO., Dept. 602, Dayton, Ohio

AGENTS DON'T accept an agency until you read our new book, "Piling Dollars"; it's FREE. DARLING BROS., Derry, N. H.

AGENTS Guaranteed Hosiery is lightning seller. Nothing like it for making money. Free sample. FORSHEE CO., B1009, Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. IMPERIAL MFG. CO., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kansas

AGENTS $38 A WEEK EXPENSES PAID. No experience or capital required, 30 days credit; photo pillow tops 30c; enlarged portraits, bromides, paintings, frames; lowest prices; samples and catalogue free. Dept. Z, Ritter Art Studio, Chicago, Ill.

PORTRAIT AND FRAME 55c. Pillow Tops 35c. 72 page cat. free. Agents wanted. Man'f'rs Portraits and Frames. National Portrait Co., Chicago, Ill.

MEN WANTED QUICKLY By big Chicago mail order house to distribute catalogues, advertise, $21 weekly, liberal expense allowance. MANAGER, 1210 State Street, Chicago.

PORTRAIT AGENTS: Pillow Tops, Bromides, Solar Prints, hand stippled and air brushed Bromides, very fine, Crayons, Pastels. The very latest (Emerlines) Picture Frames. Cheapest house of all. Samples free. Crescent Portrait Studio, 918 Montana St., Chicago

BIG MONEY selling our new Gold Letters for office windows, store fronts and glass signs. Easily applied. Sample with full particulars free. Metallic Sign Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago, Ill.

WE PAY $80 A MONTH SALARY and furnish rig and all expenses to introduce poultry and stock powders; new plan; steady work. Address BIGLER COMPANY, X418 SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

Sell Tobacco and Cigars

Locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Experience unnecessary—we give full instructions. Address HOROTOCK TOBACCO WORKS, Box K11 DANVILLE VIRGINIA

AGENTS WANTED

Sell our Big $1.00 Bottle Sarsaparilla for 39 cents.

200 Per Cent Profit.

Best Seller. Finest Medicine. Complies with pure drug law. Everyone buys. Write now for terms.

F. R. GREENE, 22 Lake St., Chicago

$25.00 A DAY. New invention; horse owners wild about them. Agents are coining money. Our premium selling plan guarantees immediate sales. Write at once for territory and free sample to workers.

AUTOMATIC CO. G 959, CINCINNATI, Ohio

PORTRAIT AGENTS WANTED.

Guaranteed Crayons size 16x20 40c. Frames at your own price. 30 days' credit, samples free. We are not in the picture and frame trust. We own a large frame factory and sell at one-half the price portrait companies can. Our business established 25 years. We can give you steady employment. Our big wholesale art catalog with confidential prices and instructions mailed free to agents. WILLIAMS PICTURE & FRAME CO., 2506 Taylor St., CHICAGO

Two Rings GIVEN

Sell ten packs Prof. Smith's Hair Tonic and Dandruff Remedy at 10c each. WE TRUST YOU. When sold return the $1 and we will send these 2 handsome rings, or choice from premium list. A reliable firm, estab. fourteen years. Rosebud Perfume Co., Box 185, Woodsboro, Md.

AGENTS Our Vegetable Soap is the fastest seller on earth. Big money—permanent business; exclusive territory; sample free. Address MORGAN SUPPLY CO., ST. LOUIS, MO.

Make Money Selling to Women

Housewives need it; want it; will buy when told of its merits

The Fresco Flat-Iron

(Self-Heating Absolutely Safe) (Burns Alcohol or Gasoline)

Write for most liberal terms. One Agent sold over 1300 last year. Booklet free

New York Flat-Iron Co. Box 50 Belle Mead, New Jersey

YOU CAN MAKE FROM $3 TO $12 A DAY

You need no experience because we teach you everything and help you to get started. If now employed, you can work for us in your spare time and make more money than your regular wages amount to. Write and let us show you our line. We have over 2000 patented articles, all fast sellers. Cannot be bought in stores.

WE WANT AGENTS In Every County In the State

We will point the way to you how to make from $150 to $200 per month. Our goods are fully guaranteed, and we refund all money to any purchaser not perfectly satisfied. We start honest men and women in business on our capital. Samples of best sellers FREE. Write to-day for agency.

THOMAS MFG CO. 2517 Wayne Street DAYTON, OHIO

Spend 1 Cent—Save $10 to $20

Made to Measure Cash or Credit

Write for our new Spring samples—they're free. You can save from $10 to $20 by ordering from us because we have no agents—you save the agent's profit—*We sell direct from our mill to you—you save three profits, get pure wool materials and better tailoring at half the price you pay others.* Cash or credit.

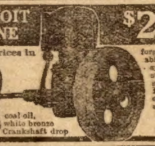
We ask no payment down when you order—after you've tried on the suit and found it satisfactory then you pay us. *Not a cent before you're satisfied*—you take no chances—our reputation of 42 years of square dealing is stitched into every suit—*we unconditionally, absolutely guarantee every garment and we positively use only pure all wool goods.*

Ask For Booklet F

Write today for free Spring samples—save money this Spring and be satisfied. Why pay three profits for your clothes, when you can buy direct from us?

Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., Halsted and 19th Place *Chicago*

Nothing Down—Liberal Credit



2 H. P. DETROIT ENGINE **$29.50** Engine only, without Electrical or Boat Equipment!

Other sizes at proportionate prices in stock ready to ship. Single cylinder engines, 2 to 8 h. p.; double cylinders, 8 to 20 h. p.; four cylinder, 20 h. p. Engines start without cranking. No cams, no sprockets, only three moving parts. All engines counterbalanced. No vibration. Special fuel injector burns gasoline, kerosene, alcohol, naphtha distillate, coal oil, Plastic white bronze bearings (no cheap babbitt used). Crankshaft drop forged steel. Bearing surfaces ground. Adjustable steel connecting rod. Waterproof ignition system. For your launch, sailboat, rowboat, stern wheel boat or railroad track car. 20,000 satisfied users. Free catalog and testimonials. **Demonstrating Agents wanted in every boating community.** Special wholesale price on first outfit sold. **Sent on 30 days' trial.** (47)

DETROIT ENGINE WORKS, No. 1261 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich. U.S.A.

FULL SIZE 31 PIECE DINNER SET FREE

FOR SELLING POST CARDS

This is a Full Size Dinner Set consisting of 31 pieces. Every piece is handsomely decorated with a bunch of violets in natural colors and bordered with pretty design in gold. The decorations are durable and will last forever. The entire set consists of perfect pieces and are selected from our first grade. We give this beautiful Dinner Set for selling only 35 packages of high grade art post cards at 10c per package. Send for the cards today. When sold send us the $3.50 and the dishes will be sent you promptly. There are positively no more sales to be made for this complete set. We Guarantee satisfaction or refund your money.

ALTON WATCH CO., DEPT. 601, CHICAGO

SAMPLE CASE FREE TO AGENTS

Coffee, Tea, Baking Powder, Extracts, Soap, Spices, Cocoanut, Soda, Etc.

We want more good male or female agents at once to sell our goods—big commission. Free premium to each customer. No one can undersell you—give finer goods. Easiest thing on earth to sell and big money in it.

$100 to $200 Per Month Easy

We trust you with the goods and premiums and pay the freight charges—you pay us when you sell the goods and collect for them. Exclusive territory given—what more could any agent want. Experience unnecessary—no money needed. Largest house of its kind in the world. Territories filling fast. Write today for free full particulars, sample case, territory, etc. Address

GREAT EASTERN COFFEE AND TEA CO., Dept. 32, St. Louis, Mo.

Free to You—My Sister FREE TO YOU and Every Sister Suffering From Woman's Ailments.

I am a woman.
I know woman's sufferings.
I have found the cure.

I will mail, free of any charge, **my home treatment** with full instructions to any sufferer from women's ailments. I want to tell **all** women about this cure—you, my reader, for yourself, your daughter, your mother, or your sister. I want to tell you how to cure yourselves at home without the help of a doctor. **Men can not** understand women's sufferings. What we women **know from experience,** we know better than any doctor. **I know that my home treatment** is a safe and sure cure for **Leucorrhoea or Whitish Discharges, Ulceration, Displacement or Falling of the Womb, Profuse, Scanty or Painful Periods, Uterine or Ovarian Tumors or Growths; also pains in the head, back and bowels, bearing down feelings, nervousness, creeping feeling up the spine, melancholy, desire to cry, hot flashes, weariness, kidney and bladder troubles where caused by weaknesses peculiar to our sex.**

I want to send you a **complete ten days' treatment entirely free** to prove to you that you can cure yourself at home easily, quickly and surely. Remember, that **it will cost you nothing** to give the treatment a complete trial; and if you should wish to continue, it will cost you only about 12 cts. a week, or less than 2 cts. a day. It will not interfere with your work or occupation. **Just send me your name and address,** tell me how you suffer if you wish, and I will send you the treatment for your case, entirely free, in plain wrapper, by return mail. I will also send you **free of cost,** my book—**"WOMAN'S OWN MEDICAL ADVISER"** with explanatory illustrations showing why women suffer, and how they can easily cure themselves at home. Every woman should have it, and learn to **think for herself.** Then when the doctor says—"You must have an operation," you can decide for yourself. Thousands of women have cured themselves with my home remedy. It cures **all, old or young. To Mothers of Daughters,** I will explain a simple home treatment which speedily and effectually cures Leucorrhoea, Green Sickness and Painful or Irregular Menstruation in Young Ladies. Plumpness and health always result from its use.

Wherever you live, I can refer you to ladies in your own locality who know and will gladly tell any sufferer that this **Home Treatment** really cures all women's diseases and makes women well, strong, plump and robust. **Just send me your address,** and the free ten days' treatment is yours, also the book. Write today, as you may not see this offer again. Address

MRS. M. SUMMERS, Box 457, - - SouthBend, Ind., U. S. A.

LACKLAND DIST. CO.
Lackland
100 PROOF
STRAIGHT
KENTUCKY
WHISKEY
LACKLAND DIST. CO.
ST. LOUIS MO

12 FULL BOTTLES 100 Proof Lackland Whiskey $4.80 Express Prepaid

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In Strange Seas.

(Continued from page seven.)

gence was crippled and bound within the strange people. Before conversation could be resumed, the door opened and Gretchen was with us. I noticed that she was seriously troubled, but she quickly gave her words instead of letting us surmise the cause.

"Lawgiver!" she exclaimed, "the people are here, and they murmur against the great young captain. They demand that when we go from here he shall be left behind, and alone. Listen!"

For one I listened, and I heard an angry hum of voices outside.

CHAPTER XI.

STARTLING NEWS.

"Are the people mad?"

Vanderdecken uttered the question in a worried way, and came to his feet slowly, as if with an effort. It was not his first evidence of an inability to meet the crisis firmly, and it troubled me afresh. As ruler of the land, he had greater power than he realized, and a bold, persistent effort might have crushed the rebellion, but he seemed unequal to the demands of the crisis.

Going to the outer door he opened it, and I saw men, women and children, with Mynheer Opzoomer at the head. Under his arm the latter bore a ponderous volume, and I suspected what it was. He lost little time. When he and Vanderdecken had bowed formally he opened proceedings.

"Lawgiver," he said, "I am here by the demand of this people, who would have a matter settled without delay. I am the keeper of the archives, and it is demanded that I read publicly the prophecy of Vanderdecken the Great."

The lawgiver said nothing. Gretchen looked at him anxiously, and then herself broke the silence.

"Is not this something for the great men of our race to discuss in private?" she exclaimed.

"What concerns all is the affair of all," coldly replied the archivist.

"Do wise men of rank debate grave matters with the unwise?" she persisted.

"Who shall say who is wise, and who unwise? Yea, and can you blame even women for wishing to have voice—you, who would settle all by your own voice? Are you greater than other women here?"

It was a keen retort, and Gretchen flushed deeply. Yet, she was not silenced.

"If the least of us seek to have voice with the greatest it is not right, and it is against that, and that only, I rebel. I ask no voice, but merely that only our head men study and decide."

Opzoomer, cornered, muttered unintelligibly, and then irritably opened his huge manuscrpit book.

"The people have said I am to read, and their word is a command to me. My duty is clear. It is the law. Is it not so, lawgiver?"

"It is the law!" admitted Vanderdecken soberly.

"Read, read!" clamored the group back of the archivist.

Opzoomer read, and each word was a nail in the coffin to bury my hopes and general concord. Vanderdecken the Great had amused himself in his later years with prophecy and strange terms. I cannot repeat just what Opzoomer spoke from the written pages, but their purport may be given in few words.

The prophecy was that the exiles would ultimately be released from their land of captivity; that a ship would come in which they could all depart, and that it would be commanded by a captain with black hair and blue eyes. All this was well enough, but the prophecy then grew ridiculous, or so I looked at it. If the ship came by day its captain was to be trusted fully, but if by night he would be an evil man, and to trust him would be ruin. Also, they were commanded to sail without him, leaving him on the land they were themselves forsaking.

Opzoomer closed the book.

"You have heard the prophecy!" he said serenely.

There was a lull. Gretchen looked at her father anxiously, but he was silent. I saw Hendrick move nervously, but he was young, and nobody seemed disposed to say a word for me until a single man pressed forward from one side. It was Jerry Whitebone, looking worn and troubled.

"Friends and brethren," he said in a hushed voice, "I have sailed two voyages with Captain Stanford. First, when he was a mere boy, and now this later time. I found him modest, civil of speech, honest, kind, generous and God-fearing. No man could be more so. I have seen no wrong in him."

"The plemario bird, child of the volcano, hides its nest so no man can find it until its brood comes forth. Man may be equally secret."

This obscure speech was from Wilhelmus Ingenhousz, and it was clear that the two patroons were united in their warfare upon me. Opzoomer again took up his intimacy with words.

"This question," he pursued, "has been debated with care, and the voice of the people is that the blue-eyed captain shall dwell with us in peace until we sail. When we go we will leave him a great abundance of food, and the free use of all the houses, and—and grains and the like, to plant another year."

"Has he been consulted?" demanded Gretchen sharply.

"No," reluctantly admitted the archivist.

"Have you asked him if he is willing to part with his vessel?" she went on quickly.

Mynheer Opzoomer said nothing.

"Since when," she demanded, "have we turned thieves to take from a friend his ship, his property?"

Opzoomer grew very red of face, hesitated, and then tapped his book with a fat finger.

"The prophecy," he reminded; "the prophecy and the law!"

"Does the law say we shall steal?"

"Gretchen," spoke Ingenhousz severely, "we have had enough of this. Never since Vanderdecken the Great first pressed foot here have women been permitted to rule, nor, for that matter, to berate the rulers. It must not be so now, but, answering you, let me say that the good of our people, the good of many, is to be studied rather than

"The prophecy!" repeated Opzoomer weakly; "the prophecy and the law."

Here Vanderdecken interposed. The chief man of the land had been silent when he should have been the loudest speaker, but he had stirred his courage, and now he was heard from. He spoke, not briefly, but for a full ten minutes. Beginning as if he was forcing himself on he soon grew wrapped up in his subject, and I admit that there was nothing to fault in his plea. Echoing much that Gretchen had said, he spoke of right and justice with a degree of eloquence, bluntly declared his people had no right to take my vessel away from me, and demanded that I be allowed to go with the rest when the Cousin Polly filled and left for the north.

It was well said, but he addressed a stubborn group. I saw plainly that he carried nobody with him. As they had believed before, so they believed now. Opzoomer held up the book and sounded his parrot cry.

"The prophecy and the law!"

"Vanderdecken would do violence to the command of his grandsire!" interrupted a shrill-voiced woman angrily.

"What matters it?" added a second woman. "Did not Vanderdecken the Great forbid that any man among us should ever be so powerful that he could override the will of the majority?"

All this I heard in silence, though it must not be supposed that I was crushed or weak. It so happened that I was chief officer of the Cousin Polly, and I intended to remain such. Not for a moment did I intend to let myself be left alone on that wretched land the exiles were so anxious to get away from.

If necessary I intended to fight for possession of my ship, but it did not suit me to stand up and rant with the foes I had there. Words would not settle the possession of the vessel, but sturdy blows might. Also, I was mindful of the fact that these folks of the South Pole were not sailors, and that it took experience to navigate a ship—ay, even to clothe her yards.

I was about to enter the discussion when a boy came running to the rear of the group.

"They have her!" he shouted, with boyish eagerness.

"Have what?" somebody asked irritably.

"Our folks have captured the big boat! I was out in my pikarro, and I saw them tying up the bad captain's sailors. It is done. They are tied and shut up downstairs in the ship, and our men have the boat."

At this the group cheered, but the tidings staggered me. Although I did not see how Bijah and Solomon could be overcome without some alarm reaching the village, for it was not beyond pistol sound, I felt that the lad was right. And if my ship was lost and my men stowed below, I was deprived of all my force.

My temper suddenly took a grip on my nerves and I carried my right hand to my hidden pistol, but Gretchen plucked at my sleeve.

"Wait!" she whispered. "Do nothing rash. I will save you yet. They will not deprive you of liberty at present. Trust me!"

"The ship is ours!" cried a thin-faced man. "Let us see it, friends. Come to the shore!"

"Away to the shore!"

It became the general cry, and the group melted like dew. Almost tumbling over each other, they ran toward the promontory that fronted on the harbor. Last of all went Opzoomer, looking very shamefaced but stubborn, and muttering an apology. He went, but two things I knew of him. He had planned this latest trick; while a suspicious imperfection of his beard on one side was, to me, good evidence that it was from his face I had plucked the wisp of beard the night before.

"I'll undo this!" cried Vanderdecken, with energy, and after them he ran, leaving me alone with Gretchen.

Her eyes were sparkling with new light, and she seized upon my arm with the freedom of one never yet harrassed by social rules.

"Is it not hard to manage a ship?" she asked, her tones brisk and crisp. "Can a novice sail it?"

"No," I replied. "It takes knowledge of the sea to do that."

"Besides you and your men, including Jerry Whitebone, who is your friend, there is but one man here who knows a thing about a ship. That man is Tony Mossett, the pirate. Do you understand?"

"Not fully, I fear," I replied.

"Tonight," she cried, as crisply as ever, "you and I must go to the pirate lair and abduct Tony. Without him they will be helpless. Yes, we must kidnap that man tonight!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE COAST MYSTERY.

I looked at the sparkling eyes before me and felt my blood leap in quickened fashion. It was not that I was set an example of stout resistance to an unjust plot, for I had never intended to be a passive party to persecution, and had only bided my time to show the people that I was something more than a football to be kicked back and forth at their pleasure; but Gretchen's speech took hold of me powerfully, and her bold idea was good after so much inactivity.

Something more was in my mind then. She looked remarkably pretty, and I gazed at her in stupid silence.

"We must kidnap Tony Mossett!" she reiterated.

"Good! As you say, that will shatter the backbone of the conspiracy, but how shall we do it? My understanding is that Tony and his so-called pirates never come here openly, but hide in the wild hills yonder. How are we to find them? Who will guide us?"

"I'll do that!" she cried quickly.

"Then you know——"

"I surely know their haunt. It is hard by what we call Zutfen Cape, being a cave in the cliff. I've known this was their hiding place for some weeks, and have even been there, unknown to them, and peered into the mouth of the cave. I had two reasons for not telling my father and others of my discovery—first, it would pain my friend Margaretha Vhorm if harm came to a certain one of the pirates, and secondly because our leaders really have never known what to do with the outlaw band if we captured them. However, I know where they [illegible] body to manage the ship if they try to sail without me and my men. But, Miss Vanderdecken, I think you need not go on the expedition. Direct me, and I'll attend to Tony Mossett."

"What!" she cried brightly, "would you rob me of the pleasure of the trip?"

"But the danger——"

"I am Vanderdecken's daughter!" she interrupted proudly.

I ended my opposition. Really, I was aware that the only reasonable hope of success was to have her along, and as she was no city-bred [illegible] it was not a wild scheme.

"[illegible]," I [illegible], "are you sure Opzoomer would [illegible] with Tony, anyhow."

She grew serious, hesitated, and then replied:

"Do you remember the attack upon yourself? Well, I have since learned that Tony and one or more of his men were in the village at that time, and that Mynheer Opzoomer was in talk with him. I am not sure but—well, it is possible——"

"I understand. To help you out I'll say I'm sure Opzoomer was one of the men who invaded my room and gave me so hard a rub. No doubt he called Tony into his plans, and then they tried to abduct or kill me."

"It is hard to believe Patroon Opzoomer would do murder, but we will let that pass. Now, Jerry Whitebone speaks well of you. Just how well do you [illegible] agree?"

"He has my best wishes, and I think he reciprocates."

"So I thought. That being so we will make Jerry one of our party tonight. Do you agree?"

"I think it an excellent idea. Interview him cautiously, if you will, and if he proves what we think, enlist him. Jerry is all right.

All this had been said rapidly, and now we went after those who had rushed to the water's edge to look out upon the unhappy Cousin Polly. Arrived there I found the party strung along the headland, every eye directed seaward. My ship was rolling gently at her anchors, and she would have looked enticingly familiar but for the fact that her deck was marred by aliens.

As the newsbearer had said, the ship was captured. Bijah and Solon were not to be seen, but the enemy were scattered fore and aft. I felt that some trick had been used, for Bijah would never permit any foe to surprise him in ordinary ways nor yield his deck without strong opposition.

My blood boiled at the sight, and I resolved to no longer be a passive figure in the drama. Vanderdecken and Opzoomer were standing side by side, and I pushed my way to where they gazed outward.

"Men!" I exclaimed, "is it a fact that my ship has been seized by your followers, acting under your orders?"

Opzoomer squirmed uneasily.

"Some of my people seem to be in charge," he mumbled.

"It is an outrage!" I stormed. "I came here in peace, and how do you reward me? Have I stolen your property or assaulted your people? What have I done to deserve such base treatment?"

The patroon's eyes came direct to a focus upon me.

"Sir," he responded, "we are in a far land that is fast going back to ice. It is death to [illegible]. We must go. We need your ship, [illegible]

[illegible] the south [illegible] I said at the last that I [illegible] It is a [illegible] thing to treat [illegible] this style!"

"You [illegible] the [illegible], and we have the prophecy of Vanderdecken the Great to guide us. By his [illegible] gift, long ago, he bade us beware under certain conditions. The conditions exist, and we must care for our women and children first of all. We will leave you here in possession of all our land, but we will sail away in the ship."

"Do you know how to navigate it?"

He smiled half-indulgently, half-scornfully

"We have only to [illegible] and pull up the sails, and the wind will do the rest."

Half-unconsciously I burst into a jeering laugh. The ignorance of the man was astonishing. My men had served a score of years before the mast without getting knowledge fit to navigate a vessel, yet this Dutchman, who had never seen a ship until I came, spoke as lightly of the matter as if it were only the running of a wagon.

"Why," I retorted, speaking in terms a landsman could understand, "first of all, you could not haul the canvas up and secure it, and if this was done and you got a stiff breeze, you would so mismanage that you would have the masts out of her in a trice, and a [illegible] on deck that would beggar any wreck ever heard of before."

"Sir," he said hotly, "you do not understand us. What we undertake, we do."

"And how would you navigate her? What do you know about the compass? Can you take an observation? Can you lay your course by the sun and other heavenly bodies?"

"Yonder is the north," said the patroon stubbornly, "that is enough for us to know."

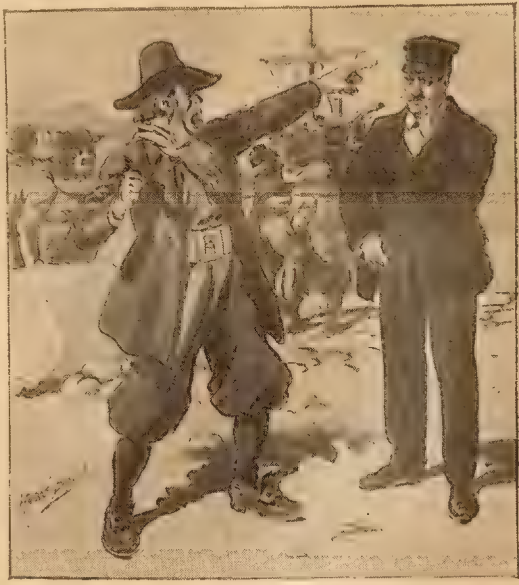
"It is not enough!" I returned sharply. "You must also know that I am not to be robbed of my ship with impunity. I demand that my sailors be liberated, the ship restored to me, and that, from this time, you keep hands off and give me decent usage."

Some of the hearers stared hard. Previously I had been mild and easy-going, but now my words bit and my manner was imperious. It did not occur to me to feel fear, and, being thoroughly angry, I took them to task warmly and belligerently. After more sparring with Opzoomer, a war of words which really amounted to nothing, poor, troubled Vanderdecken came into the talk, tried to assert some authority, and wound up with various promises. I stuck to my position.

"I demand that you release my sailors and give back my ship!" I repeated peremptorily.

"We will go into council about this," said Vanderdecken, "and I doubt not we can agree upon a plan. Our leading men will meet at once."

Opzoomer agreed to this plan, and I let the point go by. Well aware that the talk would be a farce, and that nothing would move the archivist, I did not ask leave to be present. Conscious that the way to victory was through the efforts of myself and my few friends, I gave little heed to the council, but, luckily, my courage did not waver.



"Yonder is the north, that is enough for us to know."

Bad as the situation was, I intended to make a stiff fight.

At this moment I near made a mistake. A pikarro lay at the water's edge, and I strode forward and would have entered and rowed out to the Cousin Polly, but Opzoomer cried out in Dutch and those nearest the craft closed in and prevented me. My hand doubled for a blow, but I thought better of it, and when Vanderdecken hurried forward as a peacemaker I allowed my repulse to pass.

The lawgiver, clearly worried and harassed, talked more about the council, and when the leaders turned back toward the [illegible] I kept them company, holding my head high and speaking crisply and firmly, but not carrying my defiance further then.

At Vanderdecken's door he gave me kind words and earnestly advised patience, as[illegible] that if matters grew worse he [illegible] oppose Opzoomer and Jingerhousz to the utmost. This said, he left me and went on with his colleagues. Gretchen took his place.

"I have seen Jerry Whitebone," she announced.

"Good! With what result?"

"He will help us tonight. He is [illegible] to help."

"Bravo for Jerry! Then [illegible]—"

"Go to the [illegible] and seize Tony Mossett!"

That summed up the situation from our standpoint. After that we simply waited while the Dutch leaders debated behind closed doors, and, it seemed, [illegible] to fresh decision.

[illegible]

[illegible] was filled with wrath, but it was surely best that I should have Tony in my hands before I took further action. With him prisoner, and stowed away in a nook in the land mentioned by Gretchen, I would then act with vigor.

Recover my vessel I must and would, even if it meant a deadly encounter on the Polly's deck.

Night fell with our plans for the forthcoming venture as carefully laid as was possible. At an hour when all were supposed to be in bed, Gretchen came to me, we slipped quietly out of the house, went beyond the other structures, and were there joined by Jerry. He shook my hand warmly.

"It will all be well, Captain," he declared stoutly.

"It must be so," I replied firmly.

"All we have to do is to go to Tony Mossett and seize him," added Gretchen.

It [illegible] well [illegible] but I was not blind to the logic of the outlook. Tony might not be in his den, and if he was there he might see us before we discovered him. With so many followers at his back he had all the advantage. That we could enter the cave, pick him out from among the others and take him away without a fight seemed impossible.

And if we fought, the numbers were alarmingly against us.

We walked toward the east coast, reached the water and found a two-seated boat, or pikarro, under bushes where Jerry had hidden it. The motive power being a single [illegible] of oars, Jerry took up the labor and we moved along the reach of the [illegible], barely far enough out to avoid the reefs that were [illegible] there. The night was pleasant, though only moderately light, the sky being overcast. Away to the east was the volcano, its light showing against the heavens [illegible] a pale [illegible] of fire. [illegible] as [illegible] the serpent of

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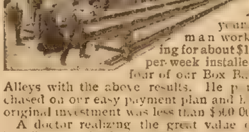

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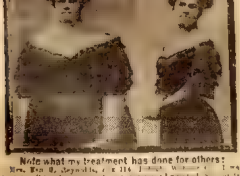

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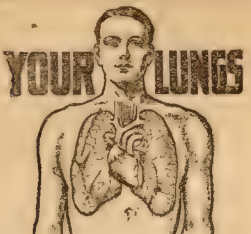

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BOYS' AND GIRLS' CORNER

A BATTLE FOR A MINE;

Or, FIGHTING DESPERATE FOES

By WILL LISENBEE

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CHAPTER I.

AT THE SPUR.

A LONG, snake-like coil of smoke trailed itself against the rugged contour of the mountain, and somewhere, deep down in the gorge, the shrill whistle of a locomotive smote the silence with its sharp staccato. To the north a mass of giant rocks lay back and forbidding in the evening sun like the ruins of a subverted city. Eastward, as far as the eye could reach, the undulating plain fell away in sinuous ripples, houseless and desolate.

A freight train, which had been sending up its muffled thunder from behind the ramparts of the hills, now rounded a curve while the rasping sound of brakes, the clanking of couplings and crash of drawheads cut sharply through the silence of the gap.

As the train came to a stop to take the spur to Dead Creek mines, two men swung themselves from the rear end of the caboose, while the rear brakeman and the conductor hurriedly rustled sundry pieces of baggage out of the car, dumping them onto the right of way.

Then, at a signal from one of the trainmen, the train was pulled onto the spur and went puffing up the steep grade, sending great balls of wool-like smoke into the windless [illegible].

The two men who had alighted from the train stood regarding the baggage with something like vexation.

"How the thunder are we to carry all this plunder into the mountains?" asked the taller of the two, with a puzzled look. "I may make a burro of myself at times but not a pack-burro."

The other laughed.

"No need to tell me that," he said. "You have never been known to submit to any physical exertion if you could avoid it."

"And I don't intend to if I can help it."

The first speaker was a man of perhaps thirty. He was rather above the medium in stature and of compact build. His face, which was cleanly shaven, might have been called handsome, though there were sinister curves about his thin lips and in the expression of his deep gray eyes. He was clad in the garb of the prospector, but there was something about his face and his white, shapely hands that stamped him as an alien to the scenes about him.

Nathan Ray was a New Yorker, and he had come West for reasons best known to himself.

His companion, Tom Templeton, was a man of forty or thereabouts, with a firm, resolute face and a pair of deep gray eyes. Much of his life had been spent on the frontier, and he had roamed from the glaciers of Alaska to the goldfields of the San Juan. He was a man hardened to the rough life of mine and ranch, while Ray was having his first experience in such a life.

The two had met in Denver a month before, and by accident, trivial in itself, they had become friends and partners. What that incident was, will appear later.

"The first thing to be done," said Templeton, "is to get these traps down by the creek yonder, where we can make a camp."

"What then?" asked Nathan Ray. "Shall we sit down and wait for an electric line to be built?"

"Better get to work and save your breath," advised Templeton, stooping to pick up a roll of blankets and some cooking utensils. "Let us get to business."

He started off down the steep incline, followed by his companion, who carried a large bag of provisions thrown over his shoulder and a frying pan in his hand.

In half an hour they had carried their effects into the valley and had built a fire, over which they hung an iron teakettle, from which the odor of boiling coffee soon issued.

"We had just as well stay here for the night," said Templeton, as he placed a frying pan containing sundry pieces of bacon over the fire. "In the morning, while you are getting breakfast, I'll run over to the ranch across the hills to the south and see if I can't get a burro to pack our traps on."

"That will be an excellent arrangement," nodded Ray.

As they drank their coffee they discussed their plans.

"We ought to make it to Vulture Pass inside of three days, if we get the burro," said Templeton. "That ought to put us there ahead of the boy, even if he should have gone in advance of us. By getting off at the spur we have saved at least fifty miles of travel, and that means a whole lot in this region."

"I should think so," agreed Ray, "especially as it looks as if we might need a stepladder pretty much of the time. I have chased about the Adirondacks a bit in my time, but these corrugations on the face of Nature have got the Adirondacks skinned a mile and a quarter."

"Yes, these hills are the real thing; it doesn't take long to find that out. That is to our advantage. If the boy don't hit onto a good guide he'll be floundering around among the peaks for a month before he sees Vulture Pass. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

"That's right. But after all, the real difficulty may come after we have reached the pass. The locating of the mine may bother us. On the other hand Mark Huber, once he reaches the place, will be able to put his finger on the mine."

Tom Templeton fished a live coal from the fire and applied it to his pipe. "If we are going to let a boy beat us at a game like this we ought to go back to Denver and open a Sunday school," he remarked. He puffed at his pipe for a moment in silence. "What do you think about it?" he asked abruptly.

Ray opened and shut his hand with a nervous gesture. "I am in the game to win," he said. "That is settled. But," he added after a pause, "I am in favor of winning by our wits rather than by a high explosive."

A sinister smile curled the lips of Templeton. "Sure thing," he said. "I am not advocating violence in any crude and vulgar shape. But by thunder, I am not in this game to be bluffed out by a mere boy. This Mark Huber, I understand, is barely eighteen, and has spent his life in the rural districts of western New York. He can't be a match for us, unless I am mistaken."

"He's a country boy, all right," replied Ray, "but when you or any one else jump him up for a fool there's bound to be some disappointment in the end. We must take that in consideration at the beginning."

"You seem to be rather proud of your nephew," remarked Templeton with a visible sneer. "It would be interesting to know what he thinks of his worthy Uncle Nathan."

Ray laughed.

"He hasn't had much of a chance to study me at close range," he said. "But no doubt he holds me in high esteem. I appreciate that all right, but it isn't worth a million to me, so I'm ready to forget it all and set in the game against him."

Templeton leaned forward, resting his chin in his hands, while he puffed vigorously at his pipe. "Of course that was understood when we started into this matter," he said. "We can be on the ground in three days if nothing happens. We will take possession of the mine, and can hold it under the law, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"The boy should beat us to the spot. But that is not probable."

"Yet it is possible?"

Templeton nodded.

"In that case," he said, slowly, "we shall have to resort to—well, let us say other means."

A hard look settled on the face of Nathan Ray, and the two men sat in silence, looking into each others eyes while the darkness settled around them and the gibbous moon swung over the black summit of the mountain.

CHAPTER II.

BLUE GULCH CITY.

The shadows of approaching night were falling in the deep canyons as the stage from Peters' Junction descended the long slope to Blue Gulch City.

The driver, a veteran at the reins, sat on the high seat and cracked his whip with a deft turn of the wrist as the stage swung on its way down the winding trail. The sharp, rasping sound of the brakes, the pounding of steel-shod hoofs and the rumbling of the swaying coach sent the echoes flying into the depths of the canyon, while under the thundering hoofs, points of fire shot into the gathering dusk.

Below, nestled in the shadows of the hills, Blue Gulch City lay in peaceful tranquility, its lights twinkling obscurely through the panes.

As the stage entered the town and drew up in front of the postoffice, a half-dozen passengers alighted, among which was a youth of some seventeen or eighteen years. He carried a leathern suitcase, and as he stepped from the stage he stopped for a moment and glanced quickly about him.

Just across the street was a large, wooden structure, two stories high—a rather imposing building when compared with its neighbors—and over the door hung the sign, painted in large red letters:

"[illegible]DENTAL HOTEL."

The youth crossed the street and entered the hotel. A half-dozen men were in the office; two rough-looking miners in earnest conversation in a corner to themselves, and a couple of drummers writing letters at a long desk against the wall. A pair of well-dressed men stood at the bar at the rear of the room, conversing with the clerk, who had just entered.

As the eyes of the clerk fell on the youth he came quickly forward to meet him, holding out his hand in greeting.

"Bless my soul, if it isn't Mark Huber!" he cried, as he seized the youth's hand. "Glad to see you. How are you, anyway?"

"I am in the best of health," replied Mark, cordially.

"And your father—how is he?"

"He is dead," said Mark, sorrowfully. "He lived but one month after we returned to the East."

"That is sad news, my boy," said the clerk in a tone of deep sympathy. "I am deeply grieved to hear it. I was afraid he could not last long when he was here. Well, well, it is too bad. Have you come West to stay?"

"For a time at least. Have you seen Dick Fenton about town recently?"

"He was here not an hour ago."

"Then I am in luck. I want to see him, and must look him up by and by. Am I too late for supper?"

"You couldn't come too late to get something to eat at this establishment," replied the clerk. "But as we run the supper hour over till the stage arrives, we can give you the best we have. Shall I have your grip sent up to your room—the one you occupied last?"

"If you please. I guess I'll have supper before I go to my room. I'm as hungry as a coyote."

"All right. While you are at supper I'll send a messenger for Dick Fenton, if you like."

"I wish you would, as I am anxious to see him right away on important business."

Mark Huber was a handsome youth of some seventeen years. He had a frank, manly countenance, clear-cut features expressive of firmness, and in his deep blue eyes there was something that told of undaunted courage. He was dressed in a well-fitting suit of gray material that showed a well-knit figure, and there were visible signs of grace and strength in his every movement.

Nearly a year before he and his father had come to Blue Gulch City from the East. Mr. Huber, who had lost a large part of his fortune in unfortunate speculations, had made up his mind to seek to regain what he had lost in the goldfields of Arizona—in the land where so many fortunes have been made and so many lost.

It was his intention to spend a year at least prospecting in the mountains and gulches of southern Arizona. Mr. Huber and Mark were accompanied on their prospecting tour by Dick Fenton, an experienced prospector. They were well equipped for the expedition, and for three months they explored canyon, gulch, mountain and plain in search of those precious stores that have lured so many into the mysterious land of silence and death.

At the end of three months they returned to Blue Gulch City, bringing with them samples of the outcropping of a vein of quartz which Dick Fenton pronounced to be very rich in gold. But Mr. Huber was not able to return to the claim he had staked, being seized with another attack of an old malady which had troubled him for some years, and he hurried to his home in the East, accompanied by Mark. He died soon after, leaving Mark an orphan.

After his father's affairs had been settled up, Mark bethought him of the specimens of quartz from his father's claim, and he took them to an assayer. To Mark's amazement they proved to be of marvelous richness, and he decided to return to Blue Gulch City without delay and make arrangements for developing the mine. And it is on his arrival at his destination that he is introduced to the reader.

When Mark had eaten his supper and returned to the office, he found Dick Fenton, the old prospector, awaiting him, and after a cordial greeting between the two, Mark led the way to his own room.

Dick Fenton was a man of fifty, and most of his life had been spent in the mining regions of the West. He was of compact build, and there was that in his face that told of a strong will and cool courage.

He took a seat facing Mark and waited for the youth to open the conversation.

"I have come back to Arizona," Mark began, "to work the vein of ore my father discovered, and if you can arrange to do so, I want you to go with me and superintend the work."

"I am doing nothing at present," replied Fenton, "and can start at any time. Have you had the specimens assayed?"

"I did that before leaving the East."

"And were they as rich as I suspected?"

"Much richer," replied Mark. "It will run something over twenty thousand dollars to the ton."

Dick Fenton gave vent to a gasp of amazement.

"Is it possible?" he cried.

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ichest ores of the Cripple Creek district," replied Mark. "And he ought to know, for he has visited nearly all the mining districts in the West, and has specimens from the great mines."

"You should not lose a moment in getting to work on the claim," advised Fenton. "While it is not likely that any one has discovered it, it is best to be on the safe side."

"But if any one should lay claim to it, he couldn't hold it, could he?" asked Mark.

"You never know what a person can do out here," replied Fenton, thoughtfully. "More than one man has been beaten out of a mine by those who had no right to it."

"But how could they do it in this case? My father staked the claim, as you and I can bear witness."

"I see you don't understand. Your testimony and mine might be contradicted by a score of hired witnesses. Besides, once the mine should get into the hands of some one else, its richness alone would bring to the aid of the holder unlimited capital, and the matter would be dragged through the courts for years."

"I see," nodded Mark, gravely. "Then we ought to get in possession of the premises at once?"

"Exactly. Possession, as the old saying goes, is eleven points of the law, and we want to get possession as soon as possible. Have you told any one about the mine?"

"Not a living soul except the assayer, and, of course, I did not mention the location. Hold—I did, too, since I come to think of it. I talked the matter over with my uncle, Nathan Ray, but I am sure he would never mention it to any one."

"Perhaps not, as he is your relative. What sort of a man is he? One's relatives are not always perfect."

"I don't know much about him," confessed Mark. "He has lived in New York City for a number of years. I spent a few days in Denver on my way home, and I ran onto him at the hotel. He asked me all about my business out West, and I told him of the mine and its richness."

"Did you give him the location?"

"Why, yes, I think I did; that is, I did the best I could to show him where the mine is located."

Fenton's face wore a grave look.

"It would have been just as well to have kept that to yourself," he said.

"Perhaps you are right," admitted Mark, "but I could hardly avoid telling him under the circumstances. He said he might be running down this way some time soon, and would have great pleasure in taking a jaunt out to the mine to see me, if I could give him the location."

"Has he been in the habit of coming to see you?" asked Fenton.

"No, sir; he rarely ever visited my father's house. When I met him in Denver I had not seen him for two years."

"It might be something apart from mere affection for you that led him to make such inquiries about the mine," remarked Fenton, "but I hope I am mistaken."

"Why, would you suspect him of having designs on the mine?" asked Mark quickly.

"I have not said that I suspect him," replied Fenton. "But we must not forget that even the bonds of relationship must be strong indeed to stand the strain of a million dollars!"

CHAPTER III.

FRANK STETSON.

"A million dollars!" gasped Mark.

"Yes, a million dollars," repeated Fenton. "Your father's mine is doubtless worth every cent of it just as it stands, if your assayer made no mistake. When such a sum as that is at stake one never knows who to depend on."

A troubled look came over Mark's face, but he said nothing. He was thinking of what Fenton had just said. Since he come to think of the matter, he realized that he knew nothing of his uncle Nathan Ray. He had been referred to as rather wild, and something of a spendthrift. Mark remembered now that he had seen him in company with a well-known gambler in Denver. He had thought nothing of it at the time, but now it was not without significance to him.

"I don't aim to imply that your kinsman would try to steal the mine," went on Fenton. "I merely mentioned the matter to put you on your guard. In the future it would be well not to discuss the mine to any one till we have it safe in our possession."

"You are right," admitted Mark. "I shall be guided by your advice in the future. We must go to the mine prepared to begin work at once. We shall have to have a number of pack burros, and we ought to have a couple of good miners, a supply of giant-powder, tools and the like. You will understand what is necessary better than I, and I'd like for you to look after that part of the business."

"All right, I'll see to it."

An hour later Dick Fenton left the hotel, and Mark retired, feeling weary from his tedious journey by stage.

As Mark was leaving the hotel the next morning, he ran almost against a youth who was sitting just outside the door. He was near Mark's own age, and was clad in a well-worn suit of clothes—a suit that bore the marks of having once been in the hands of a skillful tailor, but now in the last stage of its usefulness.

"I beg your pardon," said Mark. "I was in a hurry and didn't see you."

"Don't apologize," implored the strange youth, turning a handsome, good-humored face to the speaker. "I shouldn't have been in the door, or anywhere about the hotel. In fact, I shouldn't have been in this country at all, if I had possessed sufficient mental equipment to go in when it rains."

Mark laughed.

"They tell me it never rains here," he said.

"Which means that this country is adapted to my mental endowments," smiled the other. He held out his hand. "My name is Frank Stetson," he said, "recently from Chicago, but now of nowhere in particular; a sort of derelict without compass, destination or provisions, with a signal of distress at every mast."

Mark took the extended hand, feeling strangely attracted by the frank, open face of the boy from Chicago.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance," he said. "But—really, matters are not so bad with you as you picture, are they?"

"Worse," was the candid reply. "I'm not only short on everything in general, but I'm hungry."

"That is very easily mended," replied Mark. "Breakfast is still being served, and if you'll consent to be my guest, you'll be in a better frame of mind to talk matters over."

"Now, really, I'm not asking any one to feed me," was the reply, "at least not without giving value received. I am too proud to beg, if you'll pardon the trite expression—and am too much of a bungler at anything to steal, if I were depraved enough to do it, and so I have been looking for something to do—for an opportunity to exchange physical exertion for enough to stay my hunger. If you have got anything for me to do, name it and we'll strike a bargain."

An amused look came into Mark's face.

"Now, look here," he said, "you're not going to work before breakfast, if it is work you are bound to have. You come right in with me, and while you are eating we'll talk business. I have a proposition to make you. Come."

"Thanks, I'll do it."

Mark led the way to the diningroom, which was almost deserted, and the two took seats at a table apart from the others.

"I haven't been so hungry in ten years," declared Frank Stetson, as he tackled the steak vigorously, "and if you don't mind, I'd like to have you explain how I am to pay you for this accommidation."

"Well, you are pretty near the limit," laughed Mark. "But I don't object to humoring you if you won't mention it again. I am about to start into the mountains, a distance of a hundred miles or so, for the purpose of opening up a mine. You are not a miner, I take it, but if you want to make one of my party, I'll put you on my payroll right now and trust to your native energy to make yourself useful. That is my proposition in a nutshell. How does it strike you?"

Frank Stetson's face glowed with pleasure, and reaching across the table, he grasped Mark's hand.

"I couldn't have struck anything better if I had searched a year!" he cried. "I'm with you. I'll think I am in luck if I can earn my board and clothes. When shall you start?"

"Just as soon as we can get ready. We want to leave here to tomorrow morning if possible."

"The sooner the better, as far as I am concerned. What can I do to assist in getting ready?"

"You might help us round up the burros," smiled Mark. "We shall have to have a half-dozen or so the first thing. Then it won't take long to get the necessary provisions, tools and the like. We'll go on a burro hunt when you have breakfasted."

"All right. Who else is going with you?"

"I have only one engaged besides yourself—Mr. Fenton, an experienced miner, who is to direct the work. I shall probably need one or two more. You don't know much about mining?"

"Not a thing. Never saw a gold mine in my life, but I have used a pick and shovel a little and can do it again. But before we go any further into this matter I want to give you my references, and tell you something about myself. Oh, I'm not going to give you a history of my life. I am too lazy to do that if my life had a history to give. I simply got tired of school life and cut it out and hit the road for the West. My guardian—my parents are dead—got a little hot under the collar on account of my disregarding his wishes, and he won't honor my drafts any more, and that is why I must dig for myself for the present. Old Sprockton isn't such a bad lot, though, and he probably thinks he is doing the religious act in giving me reason for repenting my conduct. When he finds out that I am really in distress, he'll relent and come down with a handsome draft. He has done the like before, but I'd rather show him that I can rustle my own feed and garments in the meantime. Ain't I right?"

"Sure thing," nodded Mark.

"Thank you. It does me a whole lot of good to have some one agree with me. But as to my references: it is easy to talk, and one may lie as glibly as he can tell the truth. Here's my letters from Daniel Sprockton, my worthy guardian, who is well known in Chicago among the legal profession, and you can look these over and get a glimpse of who I am—a thankless sort of chap, who is distressing his guardian by wilful acts of disobedience," and he pushed a half-dozen letters across the table.

"Never mind that," protested Mark, tossing the letters back to their owner. "We'll waive all that sort of business."

"Thanks; it's good of you to take my word. It sort of braces a fellow up." He rose from the table. "I am ready to begin work," he announced. "I feel as strong as a lion, now that I have had a good square meal, and I'm ready for anything you care to set me at."

They found Dick Fenton in the office, and after Mark had introduced his new-found friend to the old prospector, the three left the hotel together.

"I have already got the work started," said Fenton. "I found a half-dozen good burros which can be bought for a trifle, and as the necessary outfit can soon be procured, we ought to get away from town by noon."

"That's right," agreed Mark. "We'll go around and get the burros the first thing, and then we'll drop around to the outfitting store and lay in our supplies."

They crossed the street and turned down an alley to a vacant lot where a number of burros were found nibbling at their feed.

"They are in fine condition, as you can see," the owner remarked, as he conducted the visitors into the lot. "They haven't been out on duty for a month, and will take the trail as chipper as larks."

"They don't look much like larks," laughed Mark, "but no doubt they are just what we are looking for."

Six of the burros were selected and brought down to the store and hitched to the rack, while Mark and his companions entered the store to purchase the necessary outfit.

Mark thrust some bills into Frank Stetson's hand as they entered, saying, "You may want to make some purchases for yourself, so you'd better take this as advance payment."

"You are the best fellow I ever met," exclaimed Frank, heartily. "By Jove, this is the first money I ever earned—or started out to earn—in all my life. It makes me feel like a man. I shall write my guardian and tell him all about it."

While Mark and Fenton were engaged in purchasing the outfit for the expedition, Frank bought a pair of stout shoes and a

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suit of clothes such as were worn by the miners and prospectors.

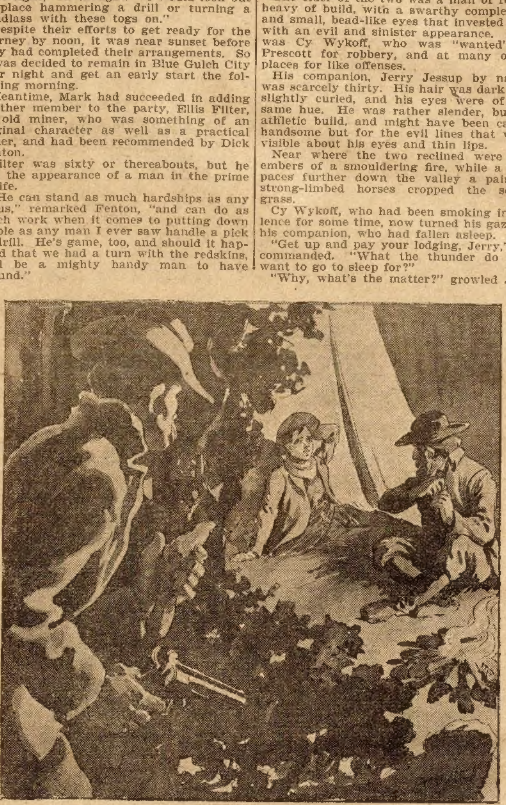
"If I am going to work I may as well go at it right," he thought. "I would look out of place hammering a drill or turning a windlass with these togs on."

Despite their efforts to get ready for the journey by noon, it was near sunset before they had completed their arrangements. So it was decided to remain in Blue Gulch City over night and get an early start the following morning.

Meantime, Mark had succeeded in adding another member to the party, Ellis Filter, an old miner, who was something of an original character as well as a practical miner, and had been recommended by Dick Fenton.

Filter was sixty or thereabouts, but he had the appearance of a man in the prime of life.

"He can stand as much hardships as any of us," remarked Fenton, "and can do as much work when it comes to putting down a hole as any man I ever saw handle a pick or drill. He's game, too, and should it happend that we had a turn with the redskins, he'd be a mighty handy man to have around."



Hy Wykoff listened eagerly to every word.

"Do you think we shall have any trouble with the Indians?" asked Mark.

"I don't think so," replied Fenton. "Still, a fellow can't tell. It is well enough to be prepared. I have a .45 and a good Winchester which I shall take with me, and Filter has the same. It is always best to go armed in a country like this."

"I think so, too," agreed Mark, so he purchased a couple of Winchester rifles and a generous supply of cartridges. "Can you handle a rifle?" he asked of Frank.

"Can I? That is one of my vices, my guardian tells me. I have spent more time at target practice than was good for my intellectual development, but I can shoot."

"Good," laughed Mark. "We'll appoint you as scout for the party and hunter extraordinary. You ought to be able to supply us with a taste of fresh meat now and then."

"Oh, I can do that all right if anything shows up worth the powder," nodded Frank. "I killed three deer while I was in Colorado. I'd like to draw a bead on a fine old buck for a starter."

"How about a buck Indian?" asked Mark.

"That," replied Frank, "would probably give me a fit of buck ague."

Everything being arranged for an early start the next morning, Mark and Frank returned to the hotel. Though only a few hours had elapsed since their first meeting, they were now the warmest of friends.

After supper Mark invited Frank into his room, where the two spent the evening in conversation, talking over incidents of their past lives and relating adventures that had befallen them.

"It seems as if I had known you for years," declared Frank Stetson as he rose to go to his own room. "I count myself lucky that I ran onto you, for I might now be sleeping out on the slope of the mountain with nothing over me but the canopy of night and an empty stomach to keep me company."

"I cannot think it would have been as bad as that," smiled Mark. "If you are pessimistic, you are certainly the most cheerful pessimist I ever met, which is illogical enough. Oh, no, you would never have to sleep out or go hungry; that is evident. I feel myself lucky to have met you, since you are to be one of our party, for I know we shall be famous friends."

The next morning, at an early hour, Mark and his little party of adventurers left Blue Gulch City and began their journey into the mysterious land, lying sun-scorched and desolate beyond the range of hills that stood dark and forbidding against the blue of the horizon.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO OF A KIND.

At the end of the first day's travel our little party of adventurers pitched their tent in a deep canyon, watered by a small stream that dashed through a rocky channel.

It was a wild and picturesque place, the blackened rocks, grim and forbidding, rising here and there like broken columns. Southward, the canyon widened into a little valley which was covered with dense thickets of chaparral.

Just below the thicket, around an angle in the rocky wall that skirted the west side of the valley, two men sat half-reclining on some blankets in the shadow of the cliff.

They were an ill-favored pair, with a month's beard upon their faces.

The elder of the two was a man of forty, heavy of build, with a swarthy complexion and small, bead-like eyes that invested him with an evil and sinister appearance. This was Cy Wykoff, who was "wanted" in Prescott for robbery, and at many other places for like offenses.

His companion, Jerry Jessup by name, was scarcely thirty. His hair was dark and slightly curled, and his eyes were of the same hue. He was rather slender, but of athletic build, and might have been called handsome but for the evil lines that were visible about his eyes and thin lips.

Near where the two reclined were the embers of a smouldering fire, while a few paces further down the valley a pair of strong-limbed horses cropped the scant grass.

Cy Wykoff, who had been smoking in silence for some time, now turned his gaze to his companion, who had fallen asleep.

"Get up and pay your lodging, Jerry," he commanded. "What the thunder do you want to go to sleep for?"

"Why, what's the matter?" growled Jessup, opening his eyes and rising to a sitting posture.

For reply, Wykoff pointed over his shoulder with his thumb.

"I don't see anything," said Jessup.

"If you will look again I think you will see smoke rising just around the angle of the wall. There are some visitors on our preserves."

Jessup sprang to his feet, alert and eager.

"By the powers, I believe you," he said. "Who are they?"

"Quien sabe," replied Wykoff.

"Then we'd better find out."

The other nodded. "That's right," he said. "We must reconnoiter."

"You don't suppose it could be any officers out for an interview with a couple of chaps from Prescott, do you?"

Wykoff yawned.

"Not a bit of it," he said. "I have been listening to some of the noises they have been making, and they are not officers. Can you smell anything alien-like in the air?"

Jessup sniffed at the faint breeze, a sudden light coming into his swarthy face.

"Coffee! by thunder!" he cried.

"Nothing else," nodded Wykoff. "Blessed, good old coffee! How it does perfume the desert and bring back memories of a little corner in Sam Filklestein's cafe at Prescott! And we haven't had a smell of it before for two long weeks."

"Two years, it seems to me," declared Jessup. "We ought to call on the proprietors of that smell."

"Sure thing."

Wykoff got up and stretched himself lazily.

"Had we better make a reconnaisance first? We don't want to run into the arms of a sheriff and his posse if we can avoid it," said Jessup.

"No, but this outfit is movers or prospectors. They have been making too much noise to be on a still hunt. I think I'll take a peep at them before we send in our cards.

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"Shall I go with you?"

"No; you can stay here and have the horses ready in case we should find it necessary to make a run for it. I always like to be on the safe side."

He plunged into the thicket and made his way cautiously up the canyon.

An eighth of a mile up the canyon he came in sight of a little open glade in which Mark Huber and his friends had made their camp. A smouldering fire, with its little ring of smoking faggots, glowed in the gathering twilight.

In front of the tent sat Dick Fenton and Mark Huber alone, the other members of the party having gone across the hills to the east in search of game.

Mark and Fenton were talking in low tones, and in the thicket, less than a hundred feet away, Cy Wykoff listened eagerly to every word they said.

"I want to tell you, Mark," Fenton was saying, "that we can't be in too much of a hurry to get to the mine. Let other parties stake it, and get in possession, and you have a whole lot of trouble on your hands."

"But they could not hold it," protested Mark.

"They can hold it till you prove your rights and eject them by law. But meantime, they will be working the claim, unless it is placed in the hands of a receiver."

"But the receiver would have to give bond."

"Yes, but it is a hundred to one that the bond would not be high enough to protect your interest if the receiver should happen to take it into his head to give you the worst of it."

"That might be," replied Mark with a troubled look. "Of course there is but little chance that any one will discover the mine."

"That is right. But I am only speaking of what the result would be in case they should. It would take time to bring the matter to a point even where a receiver could be placed in possession. And all that time the ones holding possession would be at work, and every pound of quartz taken out would be worth ten dollars! Think of the advantage they would have! They could hire the greatest lawyers on the Pacific slope; they could bring a swarm of bribed witnesses to substantiate their claims, and they would have in their hands the sinews of war—the wealth that the mine would be producing."

"I see," replied Mark. "It is very necessary that we should get possession of the mine without delay, and that we will do."

"I knew that you would agree with me, and I have mentioned the matter to prove that my idea that we ought to travel by night as well as by day as soon as we are out of the mountains. Hello!. There comes Frank Stetson—with a jack rabbit!"

And the old prospector laughed heartily.

Cy Wykoff, who had been listening to every word uttered, now quietly turned his back on the party and retraced his steps noiselessly down the canyon.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and thrilling situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

In Strange Seas.

(Continued from page eleven.)

red and yellow. Nearer, all was somber hued, and we run down the coast with Jerry laboring with the skill he had never shown in a jolly boat. In the pikarro he was at home.

Except for common words of encouragement we spoke little at the beginning. For my own part I sat with hand on my pistol or knife, feeling that both would be used presently, and wondering how the fight would result. Was it possible for us to overcome so large an opposition?

At last Gretchen started a trifle, as if she found the going trying to the nerves.

"You see, captain," she said, "that the coast is rough, irregular, rocky and marked with cliffs."

"Yes. Is it so all the way?"

"Yes, even to the land of polar ice. I think you have been told that our land ends at ice, but perhaps not that the great frozen field is ever moving, sliding slowly this way, a few rods each year, but never checked. That field of ice is bound to slide on until it reaches here and buries every rod that we till, and then, as the volcano is dying out, this will be no more than frozen desolation."

"In my land people think it so now, but I have learned otherwise."

I had learned this and much more, and I was full of wonder as we rowed on under the dim sky with the red torch blazing off to the eastward. Truly, fate was giving me a strange experience, even for a sailor.

After we had gone about three miles Gretchen cautioned against speech, lest some of the pirates should be abroad, and we moved on with only the faint dip of Jerry's oar to break the stillness. Something to break our silence was to come before the fight with the pirates, however.

We had turned a headland of the winding shore when the girl, ever peering ahead, suddenly cried out lightly, but in excitement:

"Stop!" she directed. "Look! A vessel is there!"

She was right. In a little cove a ship lay dark and quiet. She was there, yet my own vessel was a league distant. A new mystery of the sea was before us.

This very great story of sea adventures will be continued in next week's Ledger. Strange things happen, read it. Watch the Ledger in the coming months and you will find in it some of the most interesting stories ever written. With every month we will try to give you a better and more entertaining paper, so if you are not already a subscriber, you better send in a year's subscription and have the Ledger regularly. Take our advice and attend to this today.

America's Coast Defenses.

Excited Citizen—I hear a hundred foreign battleships are approaching our coast.

American Statesman—My goodness! We must notify the life-saving service. If the wind should veer around to the east'ard the poor ships would [illegible]

The Master of the Mills.

(Continued from page three.)

upon her face, which had whitened to marble hue.

"My answer, now and always, must be no!"

"You still cling to the knight of the quill, Allan Bruce, my paid dependent? Consider, girl, there is more at stake than you dream of!"

"Sir, I need not a moment for consideration; allow me to go before I lose the last remnant of respect for the man whom I had every right to consider a gentleman!"

"I have gone too far to be balked!" he cried, hoarsely. "I have sworn to possess you, if not by fair means, by foul, and this moment seals your fate!"

His arm encircled her, his strong white hand was pressed over her lips.

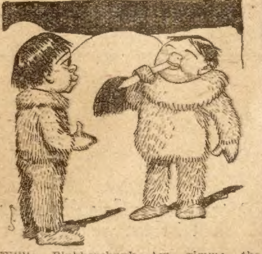
In vain she struggled; he held her with the grasp of a Titan, and a knowledge of her awful danger burst upon her with appalling force, a strange sense of faintness stole over her, but in an instant she rallied sufficiently to make a last, despairing effort to save the honor she prized more than life.

With the strength born of desperation she tore his hand from her lips and uttered a piercing cry:

"Murder! Murder!"

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

In the Far North.



Willie Blubberchunk—Aw, gimme the wick!

Tommy Candlebiter—There ain't going to be any wick.

Expensive Writing Sand.

Here is an actual instance of Russian gallantry. A celebrated opera singer, who once "starred" in Paris, received from a Muscovite prince a handsome brooch in diamonds, in acknowledgment of admiration, but not wishing to accept a gift, the motive of which might be misconstrued, she returned it with warm thanks. Next day she received a letter from the prince approvnig highly her decision; but the writing of this letter had a singularly glistening appearance, and it was afterward learned that the magnate, not to be outdone in generosity, had reduced the returned diamonds to fine powder, with which he had besprinkled the wet ink, and had thus insured the acceptance of his homage.

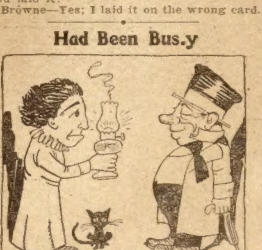
Mislaid, All Right.

Browne—I mislaid $50 last night.

Towne—Hard luck. Can't you think where you laid it?

Browne—Yes; I laid it on the wrong card.

Had Been Bus.y



"John, you have no excuse for staying out till this time of the night."

"Oh, I haven't, huh? What d'you s'pose I've been standing outside the last hour thinking about, then?"

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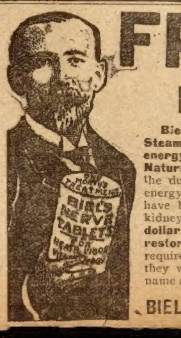

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For Youthful Eyes

"Haow's Crops?"

Two girls were standing in the snow beside a country road when a jingling of bells was heard, and a farm sled came around the corner, driven by a man wrapped up in a big buffalo robe.

"Wouldn't it be fun to get a hitch," exclaimed Natalie.

"If only Prexie hadn't forbidden it," sighed Katherine.

"Hitching" on sleighs had been a favorite amusement of the college girls, and the president had been forced to issue an order forbidding it as a dangerous and tomboyish sport.

But as the sleigh reached the bridge, Natalie looked at Katherine and Katherine looked at Natalie, and with one accord they ran forward crying, "Give us a hitch?" The man looked around quickly, said, "Certainly, certainly," and they were soon gliding along, standing comfortably on the broad runners of the bobsled.

"We'll get off before we come to the town," said Katherine, "and Prexie'll never know."

The man seemed to hear her words, for he turned around in his seat, and questioned, "College girls?"

Natalie nodded and whispered to Katherine, "Typical New England farmer. I'm going to have some fun with him." Then raising her voice, she asked, "How's crops?"

The man stroked his short, stubby beard, and answered: "Oh, fair to middlin'. I cakerlate to cla'r about twenty odd dollars off'n the rye crop."

"Well, but Mr.——Oh! I don't know your name?" said Natalie saucily.

"Call me Uncle Rube, girls," answered the farmer, rubbing his chin and chuckling to himself.

"Well, Uncle Rube," continued Natalie, winking mischievously at Katherine, "What will you do with so much money?"

"Wall, girls, I promised the old lady I'd give her a real treat next year after the hay's all in, and take her to the county fair. Mebbe they'll be enough money to buy her a new dress, too."

Katherine finally became interested in the fun and between them they kept the farmer busy answering questions about the cows, chickens and "my boy, who's set out to get an eddication at college back yander," with a backward jerk of the thumb.

The ride was all too short, but presently as they neared the town, it seemed safest to leave their good-natured friend, so they jumped off, calling "Good-by Uncle Rube."

The farmer drew up his horses with a loud "Whoa," and turning to the girls, took off his big fur cap and said in a changed voice: "Good-by, young ladies. Give Prof. Reuben Clark's compliments to President Keely, and tell the latter Prof. Clark has taken great pleasure in driving home two of the college's most witty young ladies."

Two much bewildered and mortified girls stood staring after the departing sled.

"Prof. Clark!"

"The famous historian of Alton College!"

"President's Keely's best friend!" they gasped. "Prexie'll hear all about it."

But day after day went by and nothig was said about the adventure. At last, however, one evening at a reception given to the students, as Natalie and Katherine were standing together, Presi-Keely came forward and asked with a twinkle in his eye, "Haow's crops?"

Nut-Bearing Trees.

Among our nut-bearing trees the hickories are perhaps the best known. They are strictly North American trees; none now grow in any other part of the world. There are fourteen known species, one Mexican, while the other thirteen grew east of the Rocky mountains.

The wood of most species is tough, strong and flexible—especially valuable for farm implements, tool handles, etc. There is no other kind of fuel that excels dry hickory for heat and brilliancy of flame. No finer shade trees are to be found.

But because of the value of the wood for implements and fuel the finest trees of the forest have been sacrificed, and as a consequence the crop of wild nuts is decreasing while the demand is increasing. Nurserymen are now experimenting to find the best method of propagating the trees and improving the varieties.

The Creek and Algonquin tribes of Indians made a drink from the pounded nuts, shells and all, and called it "powcohickora." Recent botanists have adopted the latter part of the Indian name, with a slight change (hicoria) as the name of the genus, which seems very fitting.

We scarcely think of the pecan as a hickory, yet it is the largest of our hickories. The wood of the pecan is hard, brittle, of a light reddish brown, and is the least valuable of all the hickories, except for fuel and for its nuts, which are collected and sold in all the markets of the north.

What the pecan is to the river valley people the shellbark, shagbark and mockernut hickories might, with a little forethought and care, become to the people living on the uplands farther north.

The black walnut is a grand tree growing in river bottoms and on hillsides west from western Massachusetts to Minnesota and southward to Georgia, Florida, Mississippi and Texas. The trunk is tall and straight. The branches are stout and spreading, forming a round topped tree when grown in the open.

The nutriment which nature provides for baby walnuts and hickories is stored in the seed leaves. While the pollen is flying from the boughs the forming nut has four communicating chambers in which one embryo plant lives all alone.

As the seed leaves are packed with oils and starches for the sustenance of the young tree they swell and stretch and soon occupy the entire four roomed apartment.

When they have attained their growth they are lobed and foldede so as to fill every cranny of the nutshell in which they lie. This is the reason that the kernels show such irregular surfaces when taken from the shells.

The family's botanic name, Juglans, is derived from Jovis glans—Jove's nut. Roman writers applied this name to the European walnut on account of the excellence of the nuts.

Jove's acorn was the walnut of commerce, for curiously enough it was this nut, not the fruit of the oak, which the Romans called an acorn.

Smallest Periodical.

The smallest periodical issued regularly in this country is edited and published by the two youngest "magazine men" of the United States. It is the Grammar School Weekly, a four page paper issued every Monday at Iowa City, Ia., by Edward H. Chamberlin, editor in chief, aged 10 years, and William H. Chamberlin, his brother, aged 13 years, who is business manager.

The Chamberlin brothers, editors and publishers, embarked on their journalistic career three years ago, issuing privately a small paper at irregular intervals, for distribution among their friends. At the opening of the current school year they decided to issue a regular paper. It now is well into the second volume. Single numbers are 1 cent each, but regular subscribers are entitled to a discount. You can pay a nickel and get the Grammar School Weekly for two months, for instance. The boys have figures to show that they can afford to make the discount, for practically every child of school age in Iowa City is a subscriber. There are the advertising rates to reckon with, too.

Six reporters scour the school weekly for news. They are pupils of the six half grades of the three last years of school, and other pupils are expected to report news to the appropriate reporters, who also canvass the lower grades for news of sufficient interest to secure a place in the pages of the paper. There are local items and witticisms—mostly hits at pupils; an exchange department, and other features of much more ambitious publications. Edward Chamberlin, the editor in chief, passes finally on everything that goes into the columns, and the news when printed is as he wrote it, without aid from any of the teachers.

"I don't remember how we came to start our first paper," said Editor Chamberlin. "We decided to issue the Grammar School Weekly beginning last fall, and as yet have had no trouble to speak of."

The pages of the paper are four by six inches, and there are fifty-eight subscribers who have paid 5 cents for two months in addition to the pupils who pay a penny each week for the current number as it is issued.

"Birds Fly."

This is a simple game. Each player places a finger on the table, which he must raise whenever the conductor of the game says: "Birds fly," "Pigeons fly," or any other winged creatures "fly."

If he names any creature without wings, such as "Pigs fly," and any player thoughtlessly raises his finger, that player must pay a forfeit, as he must also do if he omits to raise his finger when a winged creature is named.

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Andrew Fedor, of Streator, Illinois, booked $101.60 worth of orders in 17 hours by showing our samples. His profit should be a little over $75.00.

H. A. Lowery, of Yeager, Oklahoma, booked $29.50 in 11 hours. He gets about $21.00 of this.

L. J. O'Brien, of Massachusetts, writes, "My average net profit is $50.00 per week above all expenses."

H. P. Watkins, of Kansas, writes, "My first lot from you delivered for $318.40." He sent us in thirty days after the goods were shipped $72.85, which paid for them. He kept the difference.

P. P. Sessions, of Utah, writes "I would be safe in saying I earned $1500.00 in 15 months. I will do better next year."

J. Fred Lightsey, of Georgia, wrote "I cleared $800.00 above all expenses last year. I will do better this year."

J. F. Williams, of Alabama, wrote "I have a mother and small size children to support and I have paid $300.00 that I owed and supported the family."

These testimonials, with hundreds of others, are now on file, but why not send for samples, show them to friends and neighbors, book their orders and send them to us. **We will ship you goods enough to fill all the orders you get, let you collect the money, pay yourself and send our part in thirty days. You keep all above actual cost of the goods, which in most cases is about one-fourth of the selling price or out of every dollar you collect you keep 75 cents.**

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